

THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: DEVELOPMENTS, TRENDS AND POLICY CHOICES

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James A. Leach (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. LEACH. The Committee will come to order. The Chair would ask unanimous consent that his statement and those of all Members be placed in the record in full.

Without objection, so ordered.

On behalf of the Subcommittee, let me express a warm welcome to Mr. Eric John, who is making his inaugural appearance before the Committee as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

I have a number of comments that will be covered in the unanimous consent request. I just want to say that there are obviously a number of very important countries in the region with a very different set of perspectives and policy challenges. But I would also like to suggest that it is self-evident, but not self-apparent in the policy priorities of the United States Government, or any government in the world today, that the greatest foreign policy issue in the world is not necessarily the issue of war and peace nor necessarily the issue of terrorism, but is the potential life-threatening terror involved in disease control.

In Southeast Asia, we have the issue that is growing of HIV/AIDS that has killed 20 million people in the last 20 years, and possibly the emerging problem of avian flu. And I would like to have a perspective on that at some point in the Q&As of your testimony. But it is quite conceivable that all other subject matters pale in significance to the issue of disease control. And I know this is this is not historically the principal issue of the United States Department of State. But I think we are going to have to think through how it might become more central.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Leach follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES A. LEACH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to express a warm welcome to Mr. Eric John, who is making his inaugural appearance before the Committee as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. We look forward to your testimony.

We meet this morning to survey recent developments in Southeast Asia, and United States policy toward the region. As the nexus of important political, economic, and strategic factors, Southeast Asia holds great promise and also faces significant challenges. While I know that many of our friends were disappointed that Secretary Rice was unable to attend the ASEAN Regional Forum this past July, I want to assure them that the United States—including the Congress—remains committed to robust engagement in the region.

I hope that our witness will be able to address two broad questions during our discussion today. The first is how best to address the challenges of terrorism and radical Islam: In addition to the transnational activities of Jemaah Islamiya, some countries also face threats from indigenous militants. The second is how the United States should regard the growing role of China in the region. Some observers question whether China's initiatives—such as the East Asia Summit scheduled for December 2005—are attempts to marginalize U.S. influence.

In addition to these general, region-wide dynamics, I hope that today's hearing might also explore some of the following, specific circumstances, and proper U.S. policy responses:

- Indonesia continues its remarkable process of democratization and decentralization, and we join the Indonesian government in welcoming the prospect of durable peace in Aceh. At the same time, concerns persist about accountability for ongoing abuses by some Indonesian security forces, particularly in Papua.
- As exemplified by the visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister earlier this year, the United States and Vietnam are developing an unprecedented and warming bilateral relationship, with growing trade, security, and people-to-people ties. However, the depth of the relationship is constrained by continuing human rights violations, such as the jailing of dissidents, the attempt to control religious practice, and brutal crackdowns in the Central Highlands.
- Inside Burma, political and humanitarian conditions remain deplorable. I am interested in the State Department's thinking on policy options toward Burma, including recent, innovative proposals to explore these issues within the context of the UN Security Council.
- In the Philippines, President Arroyo remains politically embattled due to allegations of electoral impropriety, while her country faces challenges from violent insurgents, including Islamist terrorists in Mindanao.
- During his July visit to Washington, Singapore Prime Minister Lee signed a security framework agreement with the United States that should further bolster our robust defense relationship, which already serves as a touchstone of stability in the region.
- On a side issue, I would like to hear more about Cambodia's forced repatriation of Vietnamese Montagnard asylum seekers earlier this summer, and about U.S. efforts to halt or mitigate that circumstance. As you may know, these were issues that I raised in correspondence with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
- Finally, and most importantly, it is self-evident but not self-apparent in U.S. governmental priorities that the greatest foreign policy issue of our times is neither the problem of war and peace between nation states nor the problem of terrorism, but rather is the very human vulnerability we all share to disease. It is the HIV virus and a potential avian flu pandemic that are more grave life and death issues than those related to armaments and evil intents of mendacious minds. An update on these two issues as they relate to Southeast Asia is critical.

Again, Mr. John, thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee this morning. We look forward to your testimony.

Mr. LEACH. Let me turn to Mr. Faleomavaega. Do you have any opening statements?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I would defer to you, Mr. Chairman, if you have an opening statement.

Mr. LEACH. I have just given it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. In that case, Mr. Chairman, I will. I do have an opening statement.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing and I also would like to offer my personal welcome to our Deputy Assistant Secretary, Mr. Eric John, whom I have had the privilege of meeting a couple of times in previous visits to the Republic of Korea. Also I want to offer my commendation to Assistant Secretary Hill for his honest efforts, hopefully, in trying to break the situation in the negotiations going on now with North Korea, and my apologies, Mr. Chairman, for not being able to accompany you and the members of our delegation for your recent visit to North Korea. I had, unfortunately, a conflict in the schedule.

Mr. Chairman, Southeast Asia is of strategic, political and economic importance to the United States. Yet there is debate about whether the United States is losing credibility in this important part of the Asia-Pacific region.

As reported recently by *Newsweek* magazine, the East Asian Summit will be held in December of this year, which will include Southeast Asian countries, but also China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand, and Australia. Despite being the dominant military and political player in this part of the region, the United States has not been invited. This is the first time, in my understanding, that we have been excluded in such discussions. I would be interested to find out from Secretary Rice and our State Department, why the snub? I suppose our position may be, "Oh, we don't need to be there, oh, it is not worth our time to be there knowing that China will become the central focus and figure among the nations attending that important summit." I suppose one might say, "Are we missing something here?"

Also, recently, according to the *Newsweek* magazine article, the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, recently made a speech in Singapore where he complained about China's rising military budget. Regional newspapers, including Singapore's *Straits Times*, quickly pointed out that the United States' military budget consumes more than \$400 billion annually—closer to \$500 billion, if you add Iraq and Afghanistan—and accounts for almost half of the global defense spending. China, in contrast, spends between \$50–90 billion of its defense budget and now, instead of talking about China's military growth, *Newsweek* reports that "Asians are talking about Rumsfeld's paranoia."

In turn, Mr. Chairman, to support the war on terror, the Bush Administration has turned to Indonesia. While I applaud the people of Indonesia for demanding a more democratic form of government, and commend President Yudhoyono (SBY) for his efforts to rid Indonesia of Islamic extremism, I remain very concerned, Mr. Chairman, in shifting its focus to promote conflict between Christian and Muslim communities within Indonesia. I also remain deeply concerned about Indonesia's brutal military record and history of atrocities, human rights violations committed against the people of West Papua. Our own State Department has stated about Indonesia, and I quote:

“Security force members murdered, tortured, raped, beat and arbitrarily detained civilians and members of separatist movements in Papua.”

I also wish to submit, as a matter of record, two reports that I believe must be brought to the attention of the Congress and to the United Nations. The first report, published only last month in August, is entitled “Genocide in West Papua?” and was prepared over a course of 4 years by the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. The second report was done 2 years ago by the Yale Law School’s Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, entitled “Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control.” Both reports strongly suggest that the Indonesian Government has committed proscribed acts with the intent to destroy the West Papuan people.

Let me also emphasize, Mr. Chairman, these reports are written by third parties with no vested interest in West Papua, unlike the reports being circulated by the Indonesian Government and the United States-Indonesian society in response to H.R. 2061, the State Department Authorization bill, which includes language which would require the U.S. State Department to submit to the Congress a report analyzing the results of the 1969 Act of Free Choice, detailing also the implementation of the so-called Special Autonomy Law that was supposed to be for the benefit of the West Papuan people. I ask that these reports be included and made part of the record.

Mr. LEACH. Without objection so ordered.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. In closing, Mr. Chairman, I also ask that President Bush’s January 2005 Inaugural Address be included as part of the record. In his Inaugural Address President Bush said that, and I quote:

“ . . . [I]t is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”

[Excerpts from the information referred to follows. The full versions are filed with Subcommittee records.]

Excerpts from *Genocide in West Papua? The role of the Indonesian state apparatus and a current needs assessment of the Papuan people*, John Wing and Peter King (The University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, August 2005):

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The TNI is behind numerous incidents which result in military operations catastrophic for local communities. These incidents are also used to justify the deployment of new troop reinforcements which in turn lead to greater human rights abuses, reaction from aggrieved Papuans, then further militarization. A dangerous and destructive spiral is this perpetuated.

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Types of acts of apartheid in West Papua include the following:

- Freedom of movement in many regions is very difficult due to arbitrary acts of security apparatus
- People have to have a *surat jalan*, or travel permit, when traveling to their home villages

- People are detained with no clear reason for unspecified periods, for months or even years, and tried with no clear charges
- Papuans who are members of the military apparatus of the Republic of Indonesia will sometimes not be given any arms to equip themselves to handle crowds, whereas those coming from Indonesia will always be fully equipped with rifles, and/or pistols
- The Indonesian newcomers to Papua looking for jobs can easily get one, often within a week. Meanwhile, Papuans have to wait for years to get one. This is a form of deliberate or “structural” discrimination over the right to work
- Papuan churches and schools in the military-targeted or military operation areas always become targets of vandalism and arson by the security apparatus
- The security apparatus uses terms of denigration that degrade the dignity of West Papuans, e.g., that Papuans are animals (e.g., monkeys). A clear example can be found in the Abepura case of 2000
- HIV/AIDS has never been seriously handled, even though the Province of Papua records the highest number of victims in Indonesia. Especially in regions rich with *gaharu* [sandalwood], the military is involved as pimps bringing in HIV/AIDS affected prostitutes from Java and other parts of Indonesia.

Excerpt from *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control*, Elizabeth Brundige, Winter King, Priyeha Vahali, Stephen Vladeck, Xiang Yuan (The Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic Yale Law School, April 2004):

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Since Indonesia secured control over West Papua in 1963, and established formal sovereignty over the territory in 1969 through the so-called Act of Free Choice, West Papuans have lived as second-class citizens in their own land, deprived of their right to self-determination and subjected to serious human rights abuses at the hands of Indonesian authorities. Violent military campaigns and extrajudicial killings have claimed the lives of thousands of West Papuans. Thousands more have been subject to torture, disappearance, arbitrary detention, rape, or other forms of serious mental and bodily harm. The government of Indonesia has forced West Papuans off their land, exploited their resources, destroyed their property and crops, denigrated and attacked their culture, and excluded them from the upper levels of government, business, and education.

Excerpt from President Bush’s Inaugural Address, January 2005:

“So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”

“Today, America speaks anew to the peoples of the world:

All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you.”

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. I believe the President’s great mission of American diplomacy today should include West Papua’s plight and their right for self-determination, just as our country has given and supported the United Nations’s commitment in giving the people of East Timor the right of self determination, and that country is now becoming an independent and sovereign nation.

Mr. Chairman the issue of West Papua New Guinea is not an internal matter or an issue of territorial integrity. West Papua was a former Dutch colony, just as East Timor was a former Portuguese colony, just as Indonesia was a former colony of the Netherlands. The historical evidence is clear, Mr. Chairman, that this matter—and this is why East Timor achieved its independence from Indo-

nesia 3 years ago, through a referendum sanctioned by the United Nations and supported by our own Nation.

On the other hand, in what became known as the Act of No Choice, some 1,022 West Papuan elders, under heavy military surveillance and threats on the lives of their families, voted 100 percent—100 percent—to join Indonesia. In spite of serious violations of the UN Charter and the cries for help from the West Papuans, the West Papuan people were handed over to Indonesia in 1969.

Mr. Chairman, the West Papuans have suffered blatant and brutal human rights abuses at the hands of the Indonesian military time and time and time again. And I say enough is enough.

In the spirit of America's great mission of diplomacy to end tyranny in our world, I am hopeful that the United States will stand with the people of West Papua and support their right to self determination that was done for the good people of East Timor, not at the barrel of a gun, but by casting of a vote. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witness.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Faleomavaega follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

Mr. Chairman:

I thank you for holding this hearing and I welcome our witness, Mr. Eric John, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Southeast Asia is of strategic, political and economic importance to the United States. Yet, there is debate about whether the United States is losing presence and credibility in the region.

As reported by Newsweek, the East Asian Summit will be held in December of this year and will include the Southeast Asian countries plus China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand and Australia. Despite being the dominant military and political player in the region, the United States has not been invited and this is the first time we have been excluded in such discussions.

Also, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recently made a speech in Singapore where he complained about China's rising military budget. Regional newspapers, including Singapore's Straits Times, quickly pointed out that "the U.S. military budget consumes more than \$400 billion annually [closer to \$500 billion if you add in Iraq and Afghanistan] and accounts for almost half of global defense spending." "China," in contrast, "spends between \$50 billion and \$90 billion on defense," according to the same source. Now instead of talking about China's military growth, Newsweek reports that "Asians are talking about Rumsfeld's paranoia."

In turn, to support the war on terror, the Bush Administration has turned to Indonesia. While I applaud the people of Indonesia for demanding a more democratic form of government and commend President Yudhoyono for his efforts to rid Indonesia of Islamist extremism, I remain concerned that the JI is shifting its focus to provoke conflict between Christian and Muslim communities within Indonesia. I also remain deeply concerned about Indonesia's brutal military record in West Papua.

Our own U.S. State Department has stated that Indonesia "security force members murdered, tortured, raped, beat and arbitrarily detained civilians and members of separatist movements in Papua." I also wish to submit as a matter of record two reports that I believe must be brought to the attention of Congress and the United Nations. The first report published only last month in August 2005 is entitled *Genocide in West Papua* and was prepared over the course of 4 years by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. The second report published in December 2003 by Yale Law School's Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic is entitled *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control*. Both reports strongly suggest that the Indonesian government has committed proscribed acts with the intent to destroy the West Papuans.

Let me also emphasize that these reports are written by third parties with no vested interest in West Papua unlike the reports being circulated by the Indonesian government and the US-Indonesian society in response to H.R. 2061, the State Department Authorization bill which includes language which would require the U.S.

State Department to submit to Congress a report analyzing the 1969 "Act of Free Choice" and detailing implementation of Special Autonomy for Papua and Aceh. I ask that these reports be included in the record.

In closing, I also ask that President Bush's Inaugural Address in January 2005 be included as part of the record. In his Inaugural Address, President Bush said that "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." I believe the President's great mission of American diplomacy today should include West Papua's right to self-determination.

The issue of West Papua is not an internal matter or an issue of territorial integrity. West Papua was a former Dutch colony just as East Timor was a former Portuguese colony just as Indonesia was a former colony of the Netherlands. The historical evidence is clear on this matter and this is why East Timor achieved its independence from Indonesia in 2002 through a referendum sanctioned by the United Nations (UN).

On the other hand, in what became known as the Act of No-Choice, 1,025 West Papua elders under heavy military surveillance were selected to vote on behalf of 809,327 West Papuans on the territory's political status. In spite of serious violations of the UN Charter and the cries of help from the Papuans, West Papua was handed over to Indonesia in 1969.

Since this time, West Papuans have suffered blatant and brutal human rights abuses at the hands of the Indonesian military time and time again and enough is now enough. In the spirit of America's great mission of diplomacy to end tyranny in our world, I am hopeful that the U.S. will stand with the people of West Papua and support their right to self-determination as was done for the people of East Timor not at the barrel of a gun but by the casting of a vote.

Mr. Chairman, I welcome our witness and I look forward to our discussions today.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Mr. Rohrabacher, do you have anything?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am looking forward to the testimony today. Hopefully, you will convince me that my impression is wrong and the impression that I have of America's position in Southeast Asia is they have a policy of benign neglect about Southeast Asia. And this, as compared to other times in our history when we were intensely engaged in Southeast Asia, so, we should—well, I guess we will have a little discussion on that as your testimony proceeds.

Let me just note that the Australians have, Mr. Chairman, had an exemplary leadership in that area of the world and they are engaged dramatically, and we should be grateful that our Australian friends, who have been friends in helping us in Iraq, et cetera, and every other conflict we have ever been in, are engaged in and making up, perhaps, for America's lack of engagement in that region.

I would hope that the Deputy Assistant Secretary will be able to tell us about the dramatic advances and the cause of democracy in Vietnam, because we were told that with the free trade treaty with Vietnam that there would be a liberalization that we would be able to visualize by now. Of course, it didn't happen in Communist China, and I don't believe it has happened in Vietnam, either.

So perhaps we can have a report on that. In terms of Indonesia, my good friend, Mr. Faleomavaega, I understand the points he has made and some of them are very valid points about past sins committed by the Indonesian Government. Mr. Faleomavaega, I would hope that we also recognize that there have been some positive trends recently. And, the fact that, I mean Indonesian seems to be going in a better direction now than it did in the past, while we recognize that there were sins in the past, and our own country, of course, has had sins in the past, as well.

And Mr. Faleomavaega and I are very committed to making sure that people in the Marshall Islands, for example, are treated fairly when they weren't treated fairly in the past, et cetera.

Let me just say I want to thank the people of Thailand officially for reaching out and trying to help our people who are in desperate situations after Katrina and here, over the years, again, the people of Thailand or the Royal Family, especially of Thailand, has indicated that they are good friends of the United States, and were willing to help out, even though the resources of the people of Thailand are meager and they themselves went through a massive disaster with a tidal wave just not too long ago.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I think that the United States always forgets our best friend in Southeast Asia. And it just seems that we are not engaged at all with our very best friends. I mean we are willing to try to focus economic activity on Vietnam, which is run by people who have no commitment to democracy and brutalized their people, while we have a very democratic regime and people are struggling to make democracy work in the Philippines, and the Philippines have always been America's very best friend.

And yet there is so little to show in that relationship. And I would hope that we should be partners with the Filipinos in that part of the world, because they are committed to democracy. And if there is any country that demonstrates democratic principles even though they themselves have some pretty serious problems right now, and maybe we should be exerting a much more positive influence in helping them through those problems.

With that said, I am looking forward to the testimony. Thank you for this hearing today, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Let me turn to, I guess, Mr. Wexler. Did you have any comments you wanted to make?

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I wanted to just talk a moment, if I could, about Indonesia. I had the opportunity of spending some time there in August, and visiting with President Yudhoyono. The comments both of the Ranking Member and Mr. Rohrabacher, I think, are entirely appropriate. The Ranking Member's comments are extremely compelling. But I do think that there is a new day in Indonesia, and it presents, I think, maybe the most ripe opportunity for the United States to both engage and develop and grow a relationship that will reap enormous rewards if tended to properly from both the United States and Indonesia.

My impressions of President Yudhoyono is that we could not hope for a better partner, "we" meaning the United States. We could not hope for a better partner in Indonesia. Other than the obvious, which is that he is the first democratically-elected leader of Indonesia, he brings a perspective of both a true democrat and somebody who is thirsty for greater cooperation with the United States.

I find at times our policy related to Indonesia almost unlike any other country, in that we seem to be in a time warp, as legitimate and as compelling as past grievances are, and they need to be dealt with, it shouldn't thwart appropriate policy toward a country, as that country presents itself now.

What President Yudhoyono accomplished in Aceh is nothing short of historically remarkable, and that ought to give us hope that he has positioned the Indonesian Government in a positive light so as to peacefully resolve issues regarding separatist movements.

The peace treaty that was signed with the Free Aceh Movement is, in my mind, nothing short in terms of the degree of the accomplishment than resolving the conflict in northern Ireland and resolving the Palestinian/Israeli/Arab conflict, in resolving conflicts that still exist in the Balkans. And this guy did it on the heels of the greatest humanitarian crisis that the world has seen in years.

Having spent some time in Aceh, and seeing the extraordinary role that the American military played, and the dividends that it has reaped with public opinion in Indonesia, it would be a crime if we did not follow that wonderfully extraordinary role that the American military played after the tsunami, with a true aggressive policy. President Yudhoyono, I think rightfully, says that Indonesia may be the second largest democracy actually, not the third, because apparently, more Indonesians voted in their Presidential election than actually voted in ours. And all of this just begs the question, and I am very, very respectful of the efforts the Administration has made in the last several months, in many ways, respectfully to the Congress, the Administration has led the Congress.

The Congress has been slow to engage on military-to-military relationships with Indonesia. The Administration has led the way. The Administration has led the way on greater economic contact.

We have the largest Muslim nation in the world that has now elected a democratically positive President that is thirsting for a stronger, better relationship with the United States. And for some reason, we haven't responded as fully as we could.

Just the other day, Congressman Burton and I wrote a letter to Speaker Hastert asking him to invite President Yudhoyono to address a joint session of Congress. It should happen.

The President of Indonesia should be given the respect that we rightfully give to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to officials in India and the like.

And if I could just close, Mr. Chairman, with this observation: In the last 2 weeks, we saw two extraordinary developments, one with respect to Pakistan, one with respect to Indonesia. The Pakistani Foreign Minister met with the Israeli Foreign Minister in Turkey, an extraordinarily positive development, which was followed by a less formal interaction between the Indonesian Foreign Minister and the Israeli Foreign Minister, I believe in New York.

Indonesia and Pakistan, as the leading non-Arab Muslim states, had the opportunity and the ability to create an environment of peace in the middle Middle East that has not been existent before.

And, again, credits to the Administration for encouraging those interactions. But this also is an opportunity where our growing relationship with Indonesia can pay extraordinary dividends, not just in Southeast Asia, but in the Middle East as well. Both countries can gain.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having the hearing and enabling me to speak.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wexler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT WEXLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Thank you, Mr Chairman, I will be brief. I wanted to talk for a moment if I could about Indonesia.

I had the opportunity to spend some time there in August and visit with President Yudhoyono. I think that the comments made by the Ranking Member and Mr Rohrabacher are entirely appropriate and the Ranking Member's comments are extremely compelling. But I do think that there is a new day in Indonesia. It presents the ripest opportunity for the United States to engage, develop and grow a relationship that will reap enormous rewards, if tended to properly, for both the United States and Indonesia. My impression is that we in the United States could not hope for a better partner in Indonesia than President Yudhoyono. Other than the obvious, which is that he is the first democratically elected president of Indonesia, he brings a perspective of both a true democrat and somebody who is thirsting for a greater cooperation with the United States. I find at times that our policy towards Indonesia, almost unlike that any other country, is stuck in a time warp. As legitimate and as compelling as past grievances are—and they need to be dealt with—they should not warp appropriate policy toward a country, as that country presents itself now. What President Yudhoyono accomplished in Aceh is nothing short of historically remarkable, and that ought to give us hope that he has positioned the Indonesian government in a positive light so as to peacefully resolve issues involving separatist movements. In my mind, the peace treaty that was signed with the Free Aceh Movement is—in terms of the degree of the accomplishment—equivalent to resolving the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Israeli Arab conflict or the conflict that still exists in the Balkans. And President Yudhoyono accomplished this in the midst of the greatest humanitarian crisis the world has seen in years. Having spent some time in Aceh and having seen both the extraordinary role the American military played and the dividends it has reaped with the public opinion in Indonesia, It would be a crime if we did not follow the wonderful humanitarian role the military played after the tsunami with a truly aggressive policy.

President Yudhoyono, I think rightfully, has said that Indonesia may be the second largest democracy, not the third, because apparently more people voted in the Indonesian presidential election than in our own. I am very respectful of the efforts of the Administration has made in the last several months, in many ways actually leading Congress on this issue. The Congress has been slow to engage on military-to-military relations with Indonesia, while the Administration has led the way. The Administration has led the way on greater economic contact. We have the largest Muslim nation in the world, which has now elected a democratically positive president who is thirsting for a stronger better relationship with the United States. And for some reason we have not responded as fully as we could have. Just the other day Congressman Burton and I wrote a letter to speaker Hastert asking him to invite President Yudhoyono to address a joint session of Congress. This should happen. The President of Indonesia should be afforded the respect that we rightfully give to the Prime Minister of England and to Indian officials.

And if I may close, Mr Chairman, with this observation: in the last two week we have seen two extraordinary developments, one with respect to Pakistan and one with respect to Indonesia. The Pakistani Foreign Minister met with the Israeli Foreign Minister in Turkey. This meeting is clearly an extraordinary development, which was followed by a less formal interaction between the Indonesian Foreign Minister and the Israeli Foreign Minister in New York. Indonesia and Pakistan, as the leading non-Arab Muslim states, have the opportunity and the ability to create an environment of peace in the Middle East that has not existed for generations. Again, we must give credit to the Administration for encouraging those interactions, but this also is an opportunity for our growing relationship with Indonesia to pay dividends not just in Southeast Asia, but in the Middle East as well.

Mr. LEACH. I have a second non-Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Crowley. Do you wish to speak?

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing today and to your esteemed guest for spending his time with us today. I want to welcome our good friend, Representative Faleomavaega, back to work here. And it is good to see him looking sharp and as neat as can be.

I have had the opportunity to travel, myself, to Southeast Asia. And I have been extremely impressed with how that region of the world has bounced back since the crisis of their tsunami. But what I am most pleased to see is the change in the policy the ASEAN has taken in regards to Burma.

I would like to focus my remarks today on the situation in Burma and the continued atrocities occurring under the oppressive State Peace and Development Council, also known as the SPDC. And the so-called SPDC has done nothing to help the people of Burma and is consistently isolating their country and hindering the process of peace and democracy in Burma. In fact, just this week, a report was released by President Havel, former President of Czech Republic, and Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, calling for an urgent new and multi-lateral diplomatic initiative at the UN Security Council. This 70-page report details the countless reasons why it is time for the global community to take a new approach to the generals in Burma.

The United States and our allies must continue to pressure the military regime and work to ensure that multi-lateral pressure increases so that freedoms we enjoy here in the States every day can finally be experienced by the people of Burma. We have all heard the empty promises of the generals for almost 15 years, but we still see no movement to bring freedom and democracy to the people of that country. While the SPDC continues to thumb their noses at the international community and specifically the UN, I was pleased to see that many of our friends in ASEAN, like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, are making sure that the regime knows they will never be a leader in ASEAN, while they continue to limit the rights and freedoms of their own people.

Members of ASEAN have said that the SPDC must work with the UN to bring about a peaceful change within Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi and the democracy movement in Burma are making reasonable demands. They have sought democracy through nonviolence and dialogue. The repressive SPDC continues to do the opposite by forcefully displacing its people and spreading drugs and disease across Asia. Supporters of the freedom and democracy movement have tried their best to work through the United Nations system and to date, the UN has passed a total of 27 consecutive resolutions in the UN General Assembly and UN Commission on Human Rights. This has gone on for far too long. And it is time for the issue of Burma to be brought to the Security Council.

The UN has put forth a commendable effort over the past several years to try to bring about a diplomatic solution toward national reconciliation. All the efforts by the UN have, unfortunately, failed, not because the UN has not worked hard enough, but because the SPDC refuses to work with the UN. The SPDC has even gone as far as to deny a visa to the Secretary General's Special Envoy. We need to take a new approach to this regime, and I believe it is imperative that we work with our allies to see that this issue is brought before the Security Council. And I look forward to hearing your position on this, as well as what may have been said by President Bush to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on Burma this week. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you again. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crowley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOSEPH CROWLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Chairman Leach—thank you for holding this important hearing today. Congressman Faleomavaega it's so good to see you and I hope you are feeling well.

I would also like to thank our esteemed guests for testifying before the committee this morning.

I have had the opportunity to travel to South East Asia and been extremely impressed with how the region has bounced back from the Asian financial crisis and the manner in which they handled the tsunami.

But what I am most pleased to see is the change in policy ASEAN has taken in regards to Burma.

I would like to focus my remarks today on the situation in Burma and the continued atrocities occurring under the repressive State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

The so called SPDC has done nothing to help the people of Burma and is consistently isolating their country and hindering the progress of peace and democracy in Burma.

In fact, just this week a report was released by Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, and Desmond M. Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate calling for an urgent, new, and multilateral diplomatic initiative at the UN Security Council.

This 70 page report details the countless reasons why it is time for the global community to take a new approach to the generals in Burma.

The United States and our allies must continue to pressure the military regime and work to ensure that multilateral pressure increases so the freedoms we enjoy everyday can finally be experienced by the people of Burma.

We've all heard the empty promises of the generals for almost 15 years, but we still see no movement to bring freedom and democracy to the people of Burma.

While the SPDC continues to thumb their noses at the international community and specifically the UN, I was so pleased to see that many of our friends in ASEAN like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore are making sure that the regime knows they will never be a leader in ASEAN while they continue to limit the rights and freedoms of their people.

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This has gone on for too long and it is time for the issue of Burma to be brought to the Security Council.

The UN has put forth a commendable effort over the past several years to try and bring about a diplomatic solution towards national reconciliation.

All the efforts by the UN have failed—this is not because the UN has not worked hard enough but because the SPDC refuses to work with the UN.

The SPDC has even gone as far as to deny visa's to the Secretary General's special envoy.

We need to take a new approach to this regime and I believe it is imperative that we work with our allies to see that this issue is brought before the Security Council.

I look forward to hearing your position on this as well as what was said by President Bush to Prime Minister Thaksin on Burma this week.

Thank you.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you, Mr. Crowley. And as Chair, let me just say I appreciate the thoughtful comments of all Members on the—

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to associate myself with remarks of my colleagues from New York and Florida, both of whom I believe have grown greatly as Members of this

Committee and are demonstrating not only a knowledge, but a maturity that is very exemplary. And I appreciate it. And I am learning a lot from you fellows. Thanks.

Mr. CROWLEY. We are a little bit concerned over here now.

Mr. LEACH. Well, Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Will the Chairman yield? I also want to express my appreciation to my colleagues, Mr. Crowley and Wexler, for their insights of the problems dealing with Indonesia. It seems like the problem here is that absolutely have I ever said anything against the fact that the people of Indonesia has achieved this tremendous measure of democracy.

But as Dana has said, these are sins of the past, we don't need to recall what happened in the brutal military dictatorships of both Sukarno and Suharto. This is history. This is Faleomavaega rewriting history. The fact that almost 1 million Indonesian people were part of that genocide committed by these two military dictatorships, the fact that over 100,000 West Papuans were also brutalized and murdered and tortured by the Indonesia military for the past 30 years, the fact that the act of free choice was no choice, the fact that our own Government was party to the problem because of the height of the Cold War, we wanted Sukarno and Suharto to play with us, be on the side of the Western allies, and not with the Soviet Union Communist bloc.

And for that reason, we sacrificed the rights of the people of West Papua for right of self-determination, which we were never given, was denied for all these years. And that is all I am simply saying. And I applaud the efforts by President SBY of what he is trying to do right now in bringing about a greater measure of democracy to the good people of Indonesia. But I say this, if there are any people who can appreciate more what it means to be living under repressive regimes without any sense of democracy, it would be the people of Indonesia themselves. For some 300 years, the Dutch was not exactly a very prudent and good colonial master, if you will.

So we have in this instance some 1.5 million West Papuans who have suffered, lived in poverty and tremendous—to this day as I speak, Mr. Chairman, people of West Papua continue to suffer.

And I think it is beholden not only to the absolute failure of the United Nations to take a proper course of action at the time when these things had happened in the historical—this is historical fact, this is not Faleomavaega revising history. All I am saying, give the people of West Papua the right of self-determination the same way that East Timor, also a former province of Indonesia, was given that right because of the United Nations and because of our support.

So why are we—why have we given the people of East Timor, a former colony of the Dutch and of Indonesia, the right of self-determination and a plebiscite, and now a sovereign nation, but we are denying the same privilege, and I consider a moral, inherent right as the people of West Papua deserve to have.

That is all I am trying to raise here as an issue. And again, to my good friend from Florida, I have the highest respect for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), what he is trying to do. It is not easy. But at the same time, we cannot ignore the facts of his-

tory. And I think once we come to grips with that reality, for which we were a party, these people have been treated like animals, with all due respect, to my colleagues for the history of the presence of the Indonesia military and what they have done to these people. I think they deserve a chance.

And here, again, I want to say by all means, I am so happy to hear President SBY recently announce, to address the issues affecting West Papua, and my understanding, the media reports of \$500,000,000 supposedly was to be given to help the special autonomy law that was passed 4 years ago to help the West Papuans. And guess what? Not one penny went to the West Papuans. It went to the military. So these are some of the issues, Mr. Chairman, that I think need to be brought for a good public discussion and debate. I have nothing against the people, and for their achievement, people of Indonesia for what they have achieved. But they cannot ignore the fact that history is history.

And what the military regimes of Sukarno and Suharto have done to the people of West Papua, I think they simply deserve a break and a sense of fairness, if we are really serious about what President Bush said in January of this year about giving democracy and getting rid of tyranny. Sometimes democracies can also be in the form of tyranny, Mr. Chairman. And I am not against what President SBY is trying to do with this country. I support him. I want to do everything I can to be helpful to bring Indonesia to that level. But you cannot ignore this fact of history, 1.5 million West Papuans, and some 300,000–400,000—according to other reports—were murdered, tortured and butchered by the Indonesian military—and who trained the Indonesian military by the way? We did.

So these are some of the contradictions and some of the facts that I want to share with my colleagues in the Committee and to know, I have nothing but compassion and appreciation for what the people of Indonesia have achieved. But you cannot ignore the fact of what has happened to West Papua. And I sincerely hope that the Congress, as well as the Bush Administration, will give more serious consideration of the plight of these people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. The Chair would like to get on to the witness, but he is compelled to note that a very non-PC observation was made by Mr. Crowley, but it was very accurate in that the Distinguished Ranking Member is looking sharp. He is also thinking sharp, Mr. Crowley.

And in turning to Mr. John, I want to also comment that the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Hill, has just returned. And we are pleased to have the Deputy Assistant Secretary. But I want to go on record as saying that I think the policy of the United States toward North Korea has taken a positive step forward and that Mr. Hill is to be commended for his recent efforts in Beijing.

We all know the most difficult part of the negotiations are ahead, not behind, but a very positive step has been taken.

Deputy Secretary John, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF MR. ERIC JOHN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. JOHN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee and, other Members, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to you today. I have had the opportunity to meet many of you in travels to Asia, particularly Korea, and it has always been an honor to work with you, and all of you have a very distinguished record. So it is a very good opportunity.

I am particularly excited to speak about our policy priorities in Southeast Asia today and know that you and other colleagues are very concerned and engaged on Southeast Asia because this Administration is. And I think this government should be. It is, as Mr. Rohrabacher pointed out, it is of critical importance, all of you pointed out it is of critical importance to our Nation's interests.

And our goals in Southeast Asia are pretty clear. There are four main goals that we are looking at. The first is we see Southeast Asia as a partner that is committed to democratization and human rights and to be an engine of economic growth.

The second, we want to see nations whose varied ethnic and religious groups live together and flourish in peace. Third, we want to see countries that cooperate fully with us in battling the evils of terrorism, proliferation and infectious diseases. And fourth, we want to see a region where the United States plays a positive role in harmony with other powers.

There is no doubt that Southeast Asia will continue to be of greatest importance to the United States. The region's combined gross domestic product is over \$750 billion and growing quickly. Our two-way trade with the region totaled over \$136 billion in 2004 and continues to grow. It is home to over 500 million people and is the fifth largest market for U.S. exports. U.S. direct investment in the area is over \$90 billion. And strategically, the region sits astride the sea routes from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Pacific, through which much of the world's trade and energy shipments flow, and through which our assistance to numerous other friends and allies passes. Achieving our goals in the region is going to require intensive active engagement at all levels. And I am going to try to address, both in my statement and question-and-answer period, a lot of the issues that Members raised during your opening statements.

And I would like to start with the positive trends that we see in Southeast Asia and move on to what we see as the challenges. After that, look at how we are going to address those. The most important and encouraging trend in recent years has been the strengthening of democracy in the region with recent elections taking place not only in established democracies like Thailand and the Philippines, but also newly-democratized Indonesia and East Timor. Concurrent with the spread of democracy, prosperity is growing as regional economies move toward greater economic openness and integration. We are also seeing policies and initiatives to expand regional integration, both bilaterally and through the region's major institutions.

Southeast Asia is largely at peace. And there has been widespread rejection of terrorism, although terrorism certainly does remain a challenge and we are engaged on that front.

We see increased attention to global issues such as human trafficking, environmental degradation, infectious diseases, human rights and religious freedom. Emphasizing these positive trends and opportunities, I don't want to minimize the challenges, which include the danger of terrorism, very negative trends in Burma, and the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, most notably avian influenza.

Although Southeast Asia has generally rejected the extremist forms of Islam that spawn terrorism, our challenge remains to root out all vestiges of this menace. Burma is the one country of the region that is moving in a direction very much opposed to our interests. And as Mr. Crowley pointed out, it is one we should be very concerned with.

We remain deeply worried about the safety and welfare of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Burma. We continue to press the Burmese leadership to release them immediately and unconditionally and to engage the democratic opposition and ethnic minority political groups in a meaningful dialogue aimed at genuine national reconciliation and democracy. And I have seen the report that President Havel and Bishop Tutu released this week. And it is a very compelling account of the atrocities in Burma. And we are working at the—we have started working last week—we have been working on Burma for many years, but we started working last week at the United Nations General Assembly with bringing this again to the United Nations Security Council. It is a very serious issue, and it is one that is only getting worse and demands even more involvement by the United States.

Another area that we are working on is fighting infectious diseases such as malaria and AIDS. But we also have to prepare for new threats such as highly pathogenic avian influenza. President Bush announced a new international partnership on avian and pandemic influenza at the United Nations General Assembly earlier this month to enhance preparedness, prevention, response and containment.

Another important factor for the United States and Southeast Asia is the influence of China in the region. China's rapid economic development over the past two decades has brought new challenges and opportunities to the countries of Southeast Asia. Beijing is using its economic power to advance its interests in the region. Our goal is to help China identify those interests in ways that support United States objectives. The United States plays and will continue to play a central role in the region built on our alliance relationships, our active participation in regional organizations, and the access we grant to our open and transparent markets that helps drive both China's and the region's economies.

Earlier this year, Secretary Rice articulated our goals in region, security, opportunity, freedom.

Against a backdrop of the favorable trends that I outlined as well as the challenges, we seek to promote policies to achieve the Secretary's goals through both multi-lateral and bilateral engagement. And I would like to look first at the multi-lateral. Economically, we

seek to open markets, facilitate trade, promote transparency and fight corruption. And we are working effectively through regional multi-lateral institutions to create opportunities for American business and enhance the prosperity of the region. Strengthening relations with ASEAN is of vital importance to the U.S. since we share a common interest in promoting democracy, prosperity and stability.

We will be engaged in developing enhanced partnership with ASEAN over the next year. This partnership was proposed by ASEAN last June because it, too, is interested in putting its relationship with us on a par with the relationships it has with China, Japan, Korea, and India.

The United States is a leader in APEC, a forum that brings together 21 economies from both sides of the Pacific, including seven Southeast Asian nations. The ASEAN regional forum, the ARF, is the only multi-lateral institution in the Asia-Pacific region that is devoted solely to security issues. ASEAN created the ARF and remains its driving force.

United States participation, therefore, is both an opportunity to articulate and pursue our security interests and a mode of engagement with ASEAN. Because terrorism in Southeast Asia is a regional problem, we are working regionally, as well as bilaterally, to support counterterrorism training and intergovernmental cooperation. The ASEAN community has vigorously supported expansion of regional counterterrorism capacities as envisioned in the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, and the U.S.-ASEAN Counterterrorism Work Plan is the blueprint for U.S. engagement in this effort.

Now I would like to look at our bilateral ties and how we are pursuing our policies there. I think, as the discussion by the Distinguished Members pointed out, the most exciting and biggest challenge that we have right now is with Indonesia. In the 7 years since President Suharto resigned, Indonesia has undergone a remarkable democratic transformation. President Yudhoyono seeks to reform and modernize Indonesia's Government institutions, fight systemic corruption and reduce poverty. His administration has also signed an historic peace agreement to end the conflict in Aceh.

We now have an opportunity to strengthen our partnership with this tremendously important and dynamic country, and I would be very happy to answer questions about that.

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Abdullah has described relations with the United States as "the best they have ever been." And we are confident they will improve even further in the years ahead. We look forward to working with Malaysia to build mutual understanding between Islam and the West.

President Bush emphasized a strengthening and revitalization of alliances in our ties with two key allies—Thailand and the Philippines—and one key partner—Singapore—have been improved significantly since 2001.

The Philippines was among the first coalition partners to send forces to Iraq. And in 2003 we designated it a Major Non-NATO Ally. While we were disappointed at its subsequent withdrawal from Iraq, our alliance remains strong and we want to continue to cooperate on a broad range of issues such as the ongoing Mindanao

peace process and the jointly funded Philippine Defense Reform program designed to enhance the capabilities of the Philippine's armed forces.

We look forward to working closely with the Philippines when it assumes the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006.

Our relationship with Thailand has strengthened over the past several years. Thailand has been a staunch partner and ally, contributing troops to coalition efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. It provides crucial access to its facilities, including allowing us to use Utapao Naval Air Station for the tsunami relief operations last December. The President has designated Thailand, too, a Major Non-NATO Ally.

Singapore, although it is not a treaty ally, is a strong supporter of a continued United States security presence in Southeast Asia. Our strategic framework agreement builds upon and expands a robust wide-ranging security and economic partnership between our nations.

Our relations with other countries of the region, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Brunei, and East Timor, continue to grow, giving us the opportunity to promote mutual interests and address bilateral issues.

I reserve for last the dramatic refocusing of American attention on the region as a result of the December tsunami disaster. Our response was massive and we can look back on this as one of the proudest moments of our history. We will continue to work closely with the countries concerned and the international community on long-term reconstruction assistance. And as Representative Rohrabacher noted, Thailand stepped in with a very generous offer of aid, both from its government, its King, and its people, and it is interesting to note that virtually every other country in Southeast Asia has also stepped forward, from small donations up in the communities of Madan in Indonesia, which gave \$10,000 despite being hit by tsunami last December, to Brunei, which donated a million dollars, to the people of Vietnam, donating privately, donated thousands of dollars directly to the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi. All of these contributions, I think, signify the partnership that we have in Southeast Asia.

As I said in the beginning, Southeast Asia is undergoing dramatic change. We hope that our involvement will move the countries of the region toward the goals articulated by Secretary Rice: Security, opportunity and freedom.

The trends in the region appear to be moving in these positive directions, and we will do all that we can to ensure they continue.

And I think I would like to refer back to Representative Faleomavaega's insertion of President Bush's inaugural address, in which the President asserted that we are determined to support democracy and root out tyranny in the world. And I think if you look at our policy in Southeast Asia, we very much are doing that. And if you look at the case of Indonesia in particular, it is Exhibit A in the dramatic, positive force that democratization can do in a country. With that, I would like to close and open myself for questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. John follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. ERIC JOHN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU
OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mister Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to you about current U.S. interests and foreign policy priorities in Southeast Asia. This Administration is working aggressively to take advantage of significant opportunities to advance American interests in the region. Our goals are clear: we want to see a Southeast Asia that is a partner in the promotion of democracy and human rights and an engine of economic growth; a group of nations whose varied ethnic and religious groups live together and flourish in peace; countries that cooperate fully with us in battling the evils of terrorism, proliferation, and infectious diseases; and a region where the United States plays a positive role, in harmony with other powers.

There can be little doubt that Southeast Asia is—and will remain—of the greatest importance to the United States. The region's combined gross domestic product is over \$750 billion and is growing quickly. U.S. two-way trade with the states of Southeast Asia totaled over \$136 billion in 2004 and continues to grow. Home to over five hundred million people, Southeast Asia is a multi-billion dollar market for U.S. agricultural products and supports, directly and indirectly, millions of American jobs in all sectors of our economy. It is the fifth largest market for U.S. exports. U.S. direct investment in the area reached over \$90 billion in 2003.

In addition to its economic importance, Southeast Asia holds great strategic importance to our national interests. It sits astride the sea routes from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Pacific, through which much of the world's trade and energy shipments flow and through which our assistance to numerous other friends and allies passes. Our interests in the region are bolstered as well by the presence of two of our treaty allies—Thailand and the Philippines—and a free trade partner—Singapore.

Achieving our goals in the region will require intensive, active engagement at all levels. Fortunately, there are some positive trends that present us with significant opportunities to move forward, and we are doing all we can to take advantage of them.

SPREAD OF DEMOCRACY

The most important and encouraging trend in recent years has been the strengthening of democracy. In the last few years, elections have taken place not only in established democracies—the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand—but also in newly democratized Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, and in East Timor, a new nation and new democracy. As democracy has taken on deeper roots, it has brought with it an enhanced respect for civil society and the rule of law.

INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND GREATER PROSPERITY

Concurrent with the spread of democracy, prosperity is growing throughout the region. Regional economies are moving toward greater economic openness, lower trade barriers, and regional integration. Income levels have climbed, and extreme poverty has generally declined. Southeast Asian nations are looking increasingly beyond their borders for markets, investment capital, higher education, and ideas.

INCREASED REGIONAL COOPERATION

We are also seeing policies and initiatives to expand regional integration. This is happening politically, economically, and culturally, both bilaterally and through the region's major institutions such as ASEAN, APEC, and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

INCREASED SECURITY AND STABILITY

Southeast Asia is an area largely at peace. The region has not seen a single major military conflict for more than 25 years. There has been widespread rejection of terrorism, and we are working effectively with governments to enhance our mutual security. With some notable exceptions, governments and people have recognized the advantage of resolving differences through dialogue and the ballot box and of maintaining political stability as an essential ingredient of economic prosperity.

INCREASED ATTENTION TO GLOBAL ISSUES

We are also seeing increased attention paid to global issues. Encouraged by U.S. leadership and with our cooperation, governments throughout the region are beginning to work to combat human trafficking, environmental degradation, infectious

diseases, narcotics trafficking, and international crime, while advancing human rights and religious freedom.

Challenges

In emphasizing these positive trends and opportunities, I don't want to minimize the challenges, including the continuing danger of terrorism, the negative trends in Burma, and the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, most notably avian influenza.

Terrorism

Although Southeast Asia has generally rejected the extremist forms of Islam that spawn terrorists, our challenge remains to root out all vestiges of this menace. There is a growing realization throughout the region that terrorism threatens all governments and that the best way to confront this threat is by working together. Regional capacity building and cooperation offers us the opportunity to find the terrorists wherever they hide and bring them to justice.

Burma

One country of the region stands out as moving in a direction antithetical to our interests: Burma. The Burmese regime remains exceptionally repressive and is becoming even harsher in its treatment of its people. Burma's failure to cooperate with the international community is reprehensible. The regime has set back international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to a population that is in dire need.

We continue to look for ways to put the deteriorating situation there before the international community, including within the UN system. In June, we raised Burma during Security Council consultations under "other matters." The United Kingdom, France, Greece, Denmark and Romania supported this effort. We are also working with our partners to support efforts to place Burma on next month's Security Council agenda. Burma's junta must take steps that allow the international community to put relations on a normal footing, such as bringing its deplorable human rights practices into conformity with international standards.

We remain deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. We continue to press the Burmese leadership to release them immediately and unconditionally and to engage the democratic opposition and ethnic minority political groups in a meaningful dialogue. We are working tirelessly with our partners to help the Burmese people achieve genuine national reconciliation and democracy in Burma.

PANDEMIC DISEASE AND HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA

As we strengthen our commitments to fighting malaria and AIDS, we must also prepare for new threats to public health such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). I'm sure you are well aware that humans have died in countries of the region after contracting HPAI from birds and that the mortality rate is unusually high. HPAI has already devastated the poultry industry in the affected countries. If left unchallenged, this virus could become the first pandemic of the 21st century.

President Bush announced a new International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at the United Nations General Assembly meeting earlier this month aimed at enhancing preparedness, prevention, response, and containment activities. The Partnership will improve global readiness by elevating the issue on national agendas; coordinating efforts among donor and affected nations; mobilizing and leveraging resources; increasing transparency in disease reporting and surveillance; and building capacity to identify, contain, and respond to a pandemic influenza. We are asking affected and at-risk countries to strive for cooperation across sectors and ministries and with international health organizations to prevent an influenza pandemic and to mitigate its effects should one occur. We are asking potential donor countries to coordinate their activities to most effectively make use of limited resources and avoid duplication. We are urging all countries to place influenza pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response as high priorities.

Many nations have already joined this partnership, including Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

CHINA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

An important factor for the U.S. in Southeast Asia is the influence of China in the region. China's rapid economic development over the past two decades has brought new opportunities and challenges to the countries of Southeast Asia. While most have benefited from the expanded trade and investment opportunities that China's growing economy represents—China's trade with ASEAN grew 30% last year alone—there has been considerable debate in Asia over how China's economic

rise will change the political landscape in the region. China has focused on developing robust trade and investment relationships in the region to fuel its own domestic development. At the same time, China is also clearly interested in matching its economic power with political influence, thereby giving it an opportunity to advance its own interests in the region. Our goal is to help China increasingly identify these interests in ways that support and advance U.S. objectives. Deputy Secretary Zoellick is doing just that in his ongoing Senior Dialogue, established by agreement between the President and President Hu at APEC last year. U/S Dobriansky's Global Issues Forum also seeks to respond to China's emergence as a global player by demonstrating cooperation on a host of transnational issues. It is important to remember in this context that America's role in the region has increased at the same time China has sought to invest further in Southeast Asia. We play, and will continue to play, an essential role in the region, built on our alliance relationships, our active participation in ASEAN and APEC fora, and the access we provide to our open and transparent markets that helps drive both China's and the region's economies.

ACHIEVING OUR POLICY GOALS IN THE REGION

Earlier this year, Secretary Rice articulated our goals in the region: security, opportunity, freedom. Against this backdrop of favorable trends and challenging issues, we seek to promote policies to achieve the Secretary's goals through strong *multilateral* and *bilateral* engagement.

MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

Our challenge is to open markets, facilitate trade, promote transparency, and fight corruption. We have reached out bilaterally to the dynamic economies of the region and are working effectively through APEC and other regional multilateral fora to create opportunities for American business and enhance the prosperity of the region.

ASEAN

All Southeast Asian countries except the newly founded East Timor are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—ASEAN. Strengthening relations with ASEAN is of vital importance to the United States because ASEAN serves as a force to promote stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. Through ASEAN, neighboring countries—diverse and sometimes with historical tensions—are joined together with the common aim of achieving peace, stability, democracy, and prosperity in the region. The United States has a strong national interest in working with ASEAN. We are cooperating to advance our common interests across a full range of economic, political, and security issues, including tackling transnational problems such as terrorism, infectious diseases like Avian Flu and HIV/AIDS, trafficking in persons, and narcotics trafficking. In addition, since October 2002 we have been working under President Bush's Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative to enhance our economic ties with ASEAN.

One area in which we would like to see greater ASEAN effectiveness, though, is Burma. Our view, frankly, is that ASEAN has not done all it could or should to promote democracy. We have worked with ASEAN members to promote democracy in Burma, and we felt ASEAN made the right decision by having Burma relinquish its turn to be the Chair of ASEAN in 2006–2007. More needs to be done, however.

We will build on our solid relations over the next year to develop a comprehensive Enhanced Partnership with ASEAN. This Partnership was proposed by ASEAN last June because they too are interested in putting their relations with us on a par with their relations with China, Japan, Korea, and India. More specific elements of the Enhanced Partnership are now being developed.

APEC

The United States is a leader in APEC, a forum that brings together 21 economies from both sides of the Pacific, including the Southeast Asian nations of Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Brunei. Since APEC's founding in 1989, its work has focused on expanding trade, investment, growth, and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Support for trade liberalization by advancing progress in the WTO Doha Development Agenda continues to be the top U.S. goal in APEC in 2005. The June meeting of APEC trade ministers and the September meeting of APEC finance ministers both gave the process a good push, and this year's APEC meetings are timed perfectly for APEC to continue to lend its weight to this cause. APEC Leaders and Ministers, when they meet in November, can help pave the path to a successful WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong.

U.S. business executives routinely list piracy of intellectual property as one of the greatest challenges their companies face. In response to this concern, the United States has also made Intellectual Property Rights a major goal in APEC for 2005. Protecting the public from fraud and often even physical harm caused by counterfeit or pirated goods is increasingly seen as a security goal as well.

Recent tragic events have led the APEC leaders to recognize that there can be no prosperity without security. They have dedicated APEC not only to promoting the prosperity of the APEC economies, but also to ensuring the security of people in the APEC region. The United States is pursuing security initiatives in the context of APEC ranging from counter-terrorism and non-proliferation to pandemic and disaster preparedness.

ASEAN Regional Forum

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only multilateral institution in the Asia-Pacific region that is devoted solely to security issues. ASEAN created the ARF and remains its driving force. The United States was a founding member and remains deeply involved. U.S. participation in the ARF is both an opportunity to articulate and pursue our security interests and a mode of engagement with ASEAN.

The ARF is becoming an increasingly active and vital body with a stronger institutional character and a deeper level of engagement in important security issues such as maritime security, nonproliferation of WMD, peace arrangements and counterterrorism. This year, the U.S. has a chance to demonstrate its continued ARF commitment and engagement when it co-chairs, with the Philippines, the ARF's main working-level gathering, the Inter-sessional Support Group. We are preparing to host a meeting of this group in Honolulu in mid-October and hope to use this opportunity to promote cooperation in areas like Avian Influenza and to press for a greater focus on concrete results from ARF events.

ARF participants are increasingly willing to look at sensitive issues of importance to the United States, as evidenced by ARF approval of a U.S.-sponsored seminar on missile defense that will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, October 6-7. Assistant Secretary of State Stephen Rademaker will lead the interagency U.S. delegation to this event, which aims to highlight the threat of missile proliferation and the contribution missile defense can make to counter that threat.

I should note here that at its 12th Meeting in Vientiane, Laos, this past July, ARF accepted East Timor as its 25th member. We welcome this development, which we view as another sign of East Timor's increasing integration into the region and the international community.

Regional Security

The Southeast Asia region continues to be an attractive theater of operations for al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist organizations such as Jemaah Islamiya and the Abu Sayyaf Group. Because terrorism in Southeast Asia is a regional problem, we are working regionally, as well as bilaterally, to support counterterrorism training and intergovernmental cooperation. The ASEAN community has vigorously supported expansion of regional counterterrorism capacities as envisioned in the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, and the U.S.-ASEAN Counterterrorism Work Plan is the blueprint for U.S. engagement on this effort. ASEAN members have reached out to neighboring countries to expand cooperation in areas of information exchange and law enforcement cooperation, as well as increasing counterterrorism finance and law enforcement capacity-building efforts through training and education. At a meeting with ASEAN Senior Officials in June, we agreed on a series of steps to move forward with practical implementation of the U.S.-ASEAN Counterterrorism Work Plan. Through centers like the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism in Malaysia and the U.S.-Thailand International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok, we cooperate by supporting counterterrorism training for law enforcement officers throughout the region. Recently established as a joint project by Australia and Indonesia, the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation presents another valuable venue for cooperative capacity building in the region.

Numerous U.S. cooperative initiatives in the region aim to improve education systems, increase employment opportunities, and enhance understanding of U.S. policies and objectives. Throughout Southeast Asia our Embassies are expanding cultural outreach and exchange programs, frequently focusing on moderate Muslim groups and organizations to reduce alienation and anti-U.S. attitudes. Similarly, police training programs and support for structural reforms aim to reduce the incidence of police corruption and the consequent public disillusion and lack of support for national law enforcement efforts. Our ultimate goal is a significant degradation of terrorist capabilities, elimination of sanctuaries, institutionalized regional co-

operation, effective legal systems, and progress on contributing factors, including poverty and limited employment prospects, poor education, and corruption.

We are also continuing to look for ways to help regional states that have sovereign responsibilities for ensuring security of the vital Strait of Malacca trade route to enhance their maritime law enforcement capabilities and cooperation.

BILATERAL

In parallel with our multilateral engagement efforts, we are advancing our bilateral ties with the countries in the region.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Indonesia

We have a remarkable window of opportunity with Indonesia. In the seven years since authoritarian President Suharto resigned, Indonesia has undergone a democratic transformation. It is the world's third largest democracy and the largest majority Muslim country, with more people of Islamic faith than Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia combined. Last year, an estimated 60 percent of eligible voters directly elected President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who seeks to reform and modernize Indonesia's government institutions, fight systemic corruption, and reduce poverty. We have established a productive dialogue under our bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. President Yudhoyono has recognized the need to make changes necessary to attract foreign direct investment to partner in development of infrastructure projects and fuel needed economic growth. President Yudhoyono is committed to military reform, including increasing civilian control over the military, and improving budget transparency. President Yudhoyono's administration has also signed an historic peace agreement that we hope will end the longstanding conflict in Aceh.

There is no question that President Yudhoyono is leading a new era in Indonesia, one that promises to separate Indonesia from its repressive past. This does not mean, however, that challenges do not remain. As our 2004 Human Rights Report indicates, Indonesia's human rights record has been poor, and there is much to be done, particularly in the area of accountability for abuses committed by members of the security services. But we cannot overlook the flourishing of democracy. We now have an opportunity to resolve—not ignore—our differences with Indonesia, while strengthening our partnership with this tremendously important and dynamic country.

Malaysia

Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi has described U.S.-Malaysian relations as “the best they have ever been,” and we are confident that they will improve even further in the years ahead. Prime Minister Abdullah has pledged a more open, consultative style of government, free from the strident anti-Western rhetoric of his predecessor. He has articulated a modern and tolerant vision of Islam—Islam Hadhari (literally “civilizational Islam”) that helps shape Malaysia's domestic and foreign policies. Malaysia currently chairs the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and we look forward to working with Malaysia to build mutual understanding between Islamic communities and Western cultures. Malaysia has recently shown an increased willingness to work with its neighbors to provide air patrols of the critical Malacca Strait. We welcome this move and look forward to working with Malaysia on this effort and other cooperative efforts to improve regional security and nonproliferation.

STRENGTHENING OF ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

President Bush has emphasized the strengthening and revitalization of alliances, and in East Asia, alliance sustenance is work that is never complete. The ties we have with our two key allies—The Philippines and Thailand—and one key partner—Singapore—have been improved significantly since 2001, but the challenge of continuing this progress will occupy us in the coming years.

The Philippines

We continue to strengthen our bilateral ties with the Philippines, particularly in the Global War on Terrorism. The Philippines was among the first coalition partners to send forces to Iraq, and in 2003 we designated it a Major Non-NATO Ally. While we were disappointed at its subsequent withdrawal from Iraq, our alliance remains strong, and we continue to cooperate on a broad range of issues. We are supporting the ongoing Mindanao peace process between the Philippines government and Muslim insurgents, particularly through USAID programs designed to

make Mindanao a welcoming place for development and investment, not terrorists. We have also offered the support of the U.S. Institute for Peace to assist the peace process. We are strengthening our defense ties through the jointly funded Philippine Defense Reform program, a comprehensive multi-year effort designed to enhance the capabilities of the Philippine armed forces. President Arroyo's recent impeachment hearings prove that much more must be done to promote good governance and transparency. We are working together in multilateral fora such as the UN, where just last week the Security Council—under Philippine chairmanship—unanimously adopted UNSCR 1624 against the incitement of terrorism. We also look forward to working closely with the Philippines when it assumes the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006.

We have a significant trade and investment relationship with the Philippines, and its economic growth of 5–6% in recent years has been a bright spot. However, the Philippines faces some major economic challenges. To achieve fiscal sustainability, it must modernize its tax and customs bureaucracies and undertake effective anti-corruption measures. The Philippines imports over 90 percent of its oil, and higher oil prices mean higher inflation as well as constraints on GDP growth and job creation. Rising interest rates on its large debt stock signal further challenges ahead on the financial and fiscal front.

To help meet these challenges, in addition to our USAID programs we are initiating further concrete engagement on anti-corruption efforts and fiscal reform through the Millennium Challenge Account Threshold Country Program. Through our bilateral Trade and Investment Council, we have also encouraged the Philippines to liberalize trade.

The Philippines is an Intellectual Property Rights Priority Watch List country, and we have intensified our work with them in strengthening Intellectual Property Rights enforcement. The Philippine government has shown leadership and taken a more activist approach on Intellectual Property Rights issues by increasing the number of raids on pirating operations and retail outlets. However, progress on arrests and prosecutions remains difficult because of serious bottlenecks in the judicial sector, which they are also attempting to address.

Thailand

We have steadily strengthened our bilateral relationship with Thailand over the past several years. In the war against terrorism, Thailand has also been a staunch partner and ally, contributing troops to coalition efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thailand hosts Cobra Gold, our largest multi-national military exercise in Asia, and provides crucial access to its facilities, including allowing the U.S. Government to use Utapao Naval Air Station as the hub for regional relief operations in response to the December 26, 2004 tsunami that devastated the region. The President has designated Thailand, too, as a Major Non-NATO Ally. Our economic and trade relationship grows stronger every day. We are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement and, on September 19, signed an Open Skies Agreement to liberalize passenger air travel between our countries. With respect to the situation in Southern Thailand, we continue to closely follow the violence and other developments in that region. We are encouraged by the work of the National Reconciliation Commission and their efforts to protect human rights.

One issue on which we disagree is our policy toward Burma. Thailand's continuing engagement strategy with Burma has achieved little progress in addressing Burma's narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, cross-border migration, and other issues. We will continue to press the Thai to use their influence with the junta to push for positive change.

Singapore

President Bush and Singapore Prime Minister Lee signed a bilateral Strategic Framework Agreement in July, reflecting our shared desire to address such threats as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Though not a treaty ally, Singapore is a strong supporter of a continued U.S. security presence in Southeast Asia, which it sees as a prerequisite to continued regional stability. The Strategic Framework Agreement builds upon and expands a robust, wide-ranging security and economic partnership between our nations, also reflected in the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, our first in Southeast Asia. In the year after the FTA took effect in January 2004, U.S. exports to Singapore increased 18%. In fact, the value of U.S. exports to Singapore, which has a population of only 4 million, total more than half that of our exports to China. Our relationship with Singapore is among our most productive in all of Asia; we share many strategic perspectives and have very successfully turned this shared vision into practical, concrete achievements. Singapore's contribution to the Global War on Terror through its

military forces in Iraq is further evidence of our shared strategic perspective and close cooperation.

PROMOTING CLOSER TIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

Vietnam

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's visit to Washington in June and his meeting with President Bush were the culmination of a decade-long effort to increase bilateral understanding and cooperation. We now share a robust \$6.4 billion trade relationship with Vietnam, good cooperation in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War, increasing educational and cultural exchanges, and an expanding mutual effort to combat trade in illicit narcotics. We have also concluded an International Military Education and Training (IMET) agreement, which reflects Vietnam's decision to establish closer defense ties with the United States. The United States supports Vietnam's WTO accession on the basis of sound commercial terms and full implementation of WTO rules and obligations. We remain concerned over the Government's poor human rights record, specifically in the area of international religious freedom. The last U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue was held in 2002, but the U.S. Government refused for over two years to schedule another round of dialogue because of the Government of Vietnam's failure to make tangible progress. However, recent positive steps by the Government of Vietnam have led to scheduling a new round of dialogue, tentatively in the fall of 2005. Vietnam is also emerging as a regional player, a role that will be increasingly important to U.S. interests in East Asia in the coming years.

Cambodia

We have enjoyed excellent cooperation with Cambodia in combating terrorism and in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War. We have serious human rights and democracy concerns, but continue to press for positive change. We urge the Government to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions, fight corruption, and respect basic human rights.

Laos

We enjoy good cooperation with the Lao in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War and seek new areas of engagement in connection with our Bilateral Trade Agreement. We continue to call on Laos to improve its respect for internationally recognized human rights, particularly vis-à-vis its ethnic minority populations.

Brunei

Despite its small size, Brunei has been a valuable partner in promoting regional peace and stability. Its armed forces helped deliver relief to Aceh in the wake of last year's tsunami, and Brunei contributed to the international monitoring team in the Philippine island of Mindanao. Our militaries cooperate closely in exercises, and we share an interest in expanding economic opportunity and prosperity through free trade. We continue to work under our 2001 bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to improve our economic relationship.

East Timor

East Timor is a strong supporter and friend of the United States, which remains one of the new nation's largest bilateral donors—almost \$25 million in total assistance in FY2004. Our strategic objective is to help assist East Timor in becoming a stable, prosperous, and vibrant democracy.

Tsunami Relief

I have reserved for last the dramatic refocusing of American attention on the region as a result of the tsunami disaster of December 26, compounded by the massive earthquake of March 28 that caused further destruction in Indonesia. Drawing upon the \$656 million that the Congress has appropriated for the Tsunami Relief and Reconstruction Fund, we have supported and continue to support reconstruction efforts. These include rebuilding damaged infrastructure, such as the reconstruction of up to 240 kilometers of road and 110 bridges to re-open the Banda Aceh-Meulaboh road and facilities at the Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh. We cannot yet predict the long-term impact our humanitarian assistance will have on our relations with the affected countries and their neighbors, but our response was massive, and we can look back on this as one of the proudest moments of our history. We will continue to work closely with the countries concerned and the international community on long-term reconstruction assistance.

CONCLUSION

As I said at the beginning, Southeast Asia is undergoing dramatic change. We hope that our involvement will move the countries of the region toward the goals articulated by Secretary Rice: security, opportunity, freedom. We would like to see in the region sustained economic growth, advancement toward full democracy and respect for human rights, and cooperation in counterterrorism and nonproliferation. And we would like all of the Southeast Asian governments to do what some are already doing—allowing a varied tapestry of ethnicities and religions to flourish and prosper within their national borders. The trends in the region appear to be moving in these positive directions, and we will do all we can to ensure they continue.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, and I might note for the record that you have a very short but distinguished background in the United States foreign service, and we are pleased that you are appearing before us. As a fellow midwesterner, I think that is very appropriate.

Let me, though, move to what I think the world is becoming increasingly concerned about, and this is disease. Coughs may be more dangerous than missiles.

How prepared are we, how prepared is Southeast Asia, what interrelationships are we having? How many countries have now had any individuals that have died of the avian flu? And what is their numbers at this point in time?

Mr. JOHN. I will focus on a lot of that in generalities and I think I would like to get back to you with specific numbers to answer the detailed part of the questions. But the most important issue I would like to convey, is that the President himself is very much engaged on this issue and sees it as a very potentially significant threat to the United States as well as United States interests in Southeast Asia.

The Administration has put together an interagency group that is being coordinated by Under Secretary of State Dobriansky, which is looking at pulling together the international effort that is needed to counter avian influenza. The President, as I noted, announced last week a global initiative to fight the disease. And we are working also through APEC to fight the disease.

Indonesia. Yesterday, the President announced a very serious effort to move forward. They have suffered already potentially five deaths related to avian influenza.

The details of the program, I would prefer to answer—we can take a written question and answer to that. But it is one that we do remain engaged on and are taking very seriously.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MR. ERIC JOHN TO QUESTION ASKED DURING
THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JAMES A. LEACH

According to the WHO, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam have had cases of human deaths due to avian influenza. Four people have died in Cambodia, three people have died in Indonesia, twelve people have died in Thailand, and forty-one people have died in Vietnam.

Mr. LEACH. All I can say is that when we look at the natural disaster that we have just gone through, which I consider to be a major foreign policy blow for the United States of America, the issue of contingency planning really comes to the fore. And I do not have a sense of great contingency planning if this disease starts to spread rapidly. And I think that if I were to have any advice to the

Executive Branch today, it would be that contingency planning has got to be put on place in a massive scale.

Let me just turn to one other, what I consider to be a kind of macro foreign policy circumstance.

Arguably, the United States is the only superpower, arguably we have an emerging superpower in China. And it may be a superpower today. It looks to me as if we have two contrasting foreign policies, the great democracy in the world is emphasizing international relations politics. That is political issues, and the great nondemocracy that is the emerging superpower is emphasizing economics.

As you put these two models together, we, the "Great Democracy," appear to be putting weight on a series of issues that is diminishing our respect in the world. And China is putting weight on economics, which appears to be increasing their strength in international relations.

If this is the case, do we not want to go through some self-assessment of the priorities we are giving in our foreign policy? And I would like to hear your comments on that.

Mr. JOHN. Sure, and I would speak to how we and China, I hesitate to say, compete for interest. But to focus your question on Southeast Asia and the region of Southeast Asia, China—and I agree, I think that China has made major economic gains over the last 2 decades; if you look at just last year alone, China's trade with the ASEAN nations grew 30 percent—the positive side of that is that China's economic engagement has actually helped the economies of most Southeast Asian nations. As China's economy grows, it offers other opportunities, greater enhanced opportunities to Southeast Asian nations.

When I am in the region, I believe that Southeast Asians, both the governments and the people, see the United States in a very different light than they see China, that although they recognize that China is very engaged economically, that the interests that guide a person's daily life of freedom of expression, freedom of movement, democratization, are best exemplified by the United States. We would like to be engaged more. I think it is very difficult to compete with China on the level of engagement sheerly by the geographic distance that we face.

But if you look at how Southeast Asians and their governments see us, I still believe that the United States offers a very different model, and one that appeals still much more to the people of Southeast Asia than that of China.

Mr. LEACH. Well, in conclusion, what you say is a model, of course, that is correct. As a foreign policy set of initiatives, I am impressed that the emphasis in economics has increased China's political influence and our emphasis in politics may have decreased our economic influence, which is a really odd set of juxtapositions.

In any regard, I would just like to conclude with a reference to the tsunami where the American response was so profoundly appropriate and extraordinary, and expressed from a Committee's point of view, that my appreciation for—and I think I am confident of the Committee's appreciation for the support of Southeast Asian countries to our dilemma related to our hurricane. We may have another one today. And so things are awkward in terms of natural

disasters. But this conjunction of manmade and natural disasters in terms of how we in the world community, and the United States in particular, deals with our issues that, I think, will be decades in analysis. And it is going to be very interesting to see how societies rise or don't perfectly rise to the occasion. Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Secretary John for his statement, and certainly very comprehensive understanding also, the situation here in Southeast Asia.

I just wanted to ask Secretary John about our situation where Myanmar, or Burma, I believe we currently have as our matter of stated policy of putting economic sanctions against Burma along with the European allies, yet on the other side of the coin, China, I think, exports some \$1 billion worth of gas and economic aid to Burma, along with other countries that are investing in Burma like China, India, and other members of ASEAN. Every year, China gives about \$200 million in economic aid to the Burmese military regime. And I believe some 60 percent of the Burmese economy is controlled by China.

So, how effective are economic sanctions, given the fact that our own allies are the ones giving blood, or, continuation of this military regime to function economically and with whatever they are doing right now?

And I just wanted to ask, what is the Administration's policy given the fact it appears, in my humble opinion, that we have failed in this economic sanctions policy?

And yet, Burma is, I believe, a member of ASEAN, with all the rights and privileges as a fellow member ASEAN among the ASEAN countries. So we have in place an economic sanctions policy. In my humble opinion, it has not been very successful. So where do we go from here?

Mr. JOHN. Well, I would agree that, by any measure, you know, Burma is not heading in the right direction. I think that one country you left off the list was Thailand as well, which has followed a policy of constructive engagement with Burma, which I think I would call an oxymoron. You can't constructively engage the regime in Burma.

And it is unfortunate that other nations have such strong economic and other ties to Burma. It presents a very serious threat to the region. It is the drug-running, the human trafficking, not to mention the very severe oppression of its own people.

I would hesitate to say, though, that sanctions should be dropped simply because the SPDC has continued to oppress its people. I believe that we are looking at options again to further strengthen those sanctions, at working with international partners to make that—to make our policy—to make a more effective international policy, working with the UN Security Council this week. And it is something that—I have only been here for 3 months, unfortunately, but it is something I am very focused on in terms of moving forward. I would very much like to continue consulting with this Subcommittee as we do that.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I have mentioned earlier about the upcoming economic summit that is going to be held in December and the fact that we are being snubbed and not being invited to be a member, even given the fact that we are the largest economic and mili-

tary power throughout the whole Asian-Pacific region, and we are not being invited to this summit.

What is the Administration's position on this? I hinted earlier, well we don't care. Are we not that important, even though China and Japan and other major economic powers are invited among the Asian countries, but we are not?

Is the Administration taking this to heart? Or maybe it is just not that important for us to consider seriously. This summit, it has substance, or is this a matter of form?

Mr. JOHN. Well, it is a question we get all the time, which is, what is our policy on the East Asian Summit? And quite frankly, we haven't determined a policy because the East Asian Summit is really, as you look at it, just a black box. Nobody knows what the East Asian Summit is other than leaders coming together. We don't know if it is to discuss security issues, economic issues, we don't know the direction of it. What we are doing in the absence of those key facts is working with allies in the region, working with other partners in the region to try and determine first of all, what the East Asian Summit is, continue to observe and then once we figure out what it is, then we move on to determine what our policy would be toward the EAS.

Putting the EAS aside though, I would submit that the other multi-lateral fora, which we are engaging, are quite effective, the ASEAN regional forum, APEC, these cover security and economic issues. And we are very much engaged in those. And once EAS begins to take form, we will continue to study that and look at how we engage and what we want to do with the EAS. But until that time, it is—I would hesitate to push for an invitation to an organization when we don't even know what it does.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I think I join the Chairman in expressing the view that the greatest danger, enemy of the world today, is not guns and bullets, but disease and poverty and hunger and genocide, if you will, and natural disasters is what we are having to deal with. How committed is the Bush Administration in these areas? I know that we have made commitments about giving aid concerning AIDS and this very serious disease. Is this definitely part of the very high priority list of the Administration in these areas?

Mr. JOHN. Very high priority. I think you covered a broad range of issues. We are engaged on all of those. I think, as I inadequately tried to describe our engagement on avian influenza, that is being operated at a very high level in the government and is being worked at, regardless of political ideology, with Southeast Asian countries, from Vietnam to China, Indonesia, and others. The poverty reduction, the threat of HIV and AIDS, we are looking, and again we are working those bilaterally and through multi-lateral and investing significant resources in that.

And in terms of poverty reduction, which contributes significantly to the spread of disease—well, poverty contributes significantly to the presence and spread of disease. We are working very much with the partners in Indonesia, Philippines, others on programs both for eradicating poverty in certain regions as well as helping institute fiscal responsibility that allows the government to have an adequate budget to address health and education issues.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I don't want to be redundant about the situation in Indonesia. The issues that I have raised were about Papua New Guinea. When Secretary Rice first appeared in our Committee, for the whole 5 minutes that I had my little piece to say, I wanted to raise with our Secretary of State the issue of West Papua. I will be happy to give you the copy of the dialog that I had with Secretary Rice, and I kind of thought that maybe she did take interest and concern about the issues that I raised with West Papua. And I certainly would appreciate if you could find out exactly what is the Bush Administration's policy toward that.

I know it is respecting the territorial integrity of Indonesia about this issue, but when you talk about human rights violations, when you talk about the acts of free choice, when you talk about the non-implementation of the special autonomy law, it gets to real serious reasoning that, with all due respect to President SBY and his Government, there seems to be no action taken to this day by the Indonesian Government to address this very serious issue of the people of West Papua. You don't need to respond, but I just wanted to pass that on to you.

We talked about China earlier. I remember years ago I talked to a Chinese Ambassador about why China has full-fledged Embassies in the small island nations not only throughout the Pacific, but throughout other parts of the world. And the Ambassador's response to me was, "Well, sir, we treat small nations and big nations alike. We don't measure our attention to a country simply because of the numbers and economics. We feel that these people are just as important, whether your small island nation is 170,000 people or 300 million."

I just saw last night, news about the presence of Wal-Mart in China. Giving some calculation, they are looking at the fact that the Chinese are very intrigued and attracted to this concept of buying things in the store. And some calculation, if Wal-Mart gets 3 percent of the market out of 1.3 people billion in China, there is about \$20 billion in gross sales. So Wal-Mart plans to establish 90 stores throughout China because of this tremendous—and I have always wanted to ask you, sir, there seems to be a conflicting idea, and I suppose this is even true within the Administration. My question is: Are we to treat China as a monster or as a partner?

Mr. JOHN. I think we should treat China as a fact. It is a significant factor in Southeast Asia or throughout the world. I mean, I would hesitate to characterize China in terms of how we operate in Southeast Asia, the United States as either a threat or ally. It is just a very significant factor. I think a lot of Chinese interests run very much counter to what United States interests are. They are not there to promote democratization, they are not there to promote human rights, they are not there to promote freedom of expression and movement. On the other hand, as I noted earlier, they are there to engage economically. And as economies improve in Southeast Asia, so do the livelihoods of Southeast Asian people themselves. That is almost always a good thing.

To move toward China, therefore, in Southeast Asia as either confronting it or using it as an ally is perhaps a bit too black and white. But you are going to find areas where you have common interests and push them forward, and you are going to have areas

where you do not and where there are political conflicts between the two of us.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I have taken way beyond my time.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. LEACH. You may have a second round. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As you might surmise by the remarks, there is a strong sentiment in Congress that the President of the United States should do something, perhaps do everything possible, to overthrow the dictatorship that now controls the people of Burma. And I would suggest that there would be considerable support in Congress for the United States to be supportive of resistance movements and the democratic opposition in Burma, and perhaps even supportive of covert operations designed to eliminate the stranglehold of the dictatorship Burma has on their people.

I would note that the United States Government cannot do this on their own. I mean, we, the people of the United States, and the United States Government can do so much, but the people of Burma also have to actively involve themselves in overthrowing that dictatorship or it is not going to happen.

And we called on especially the rank-and-file of the military in Burma to turn their guns in the opposite direction, away from the people, who are, after all, their families and their fellow citizens of Burma, and they should be turning their guns in the opposite direction on the dictators and gangsters that are raping that country. And perhaps they could join with Aung San Suu Kyi and do away with this monstrous dictatorship that has been holding Burma back. And I would hope that if they do that, that this Administration would be very supportive of any revolt against tyranny in Burma. And I would assure you there is lots of support in Congress for that, and there is lots—of course, the people of the United States would always be on the side of those who are struggling for democracy and freedom.

That leads me to China, which is, of course, the unseen hand behind the dictatorship in Burma. The Chinese Government has—and I think that in your testimony you do not differentiate something that we should think about. The difference between the people of China—what China is doing through its people economically is one thing, and the policies of the Chinese Government, which is still a Communist dictatorship, is another. And the Chinese dictatorship has armed the Burmese military, and they have—what they have done is they have taken these gangsters in Burma and, along with other countries, I might add, for example, like Laos and Cambodia, and armed the dictators and at the same time put those regimes in debt, which are being repaid by those regimes at the expense of their own people, expense of the people of Burma and Laos and Cambodia.

So your comments about China, I appreciate some of the things you said, but I think that we have to be much more in opposition, and not just in competition, but in opposition, morally, to the effect the Chinese Government is having on Southeast Asia.

Mr. JOHN. Right. Thank you. I think that is absolutely correct. As I tried to say, there are some areas where China's work runs

counter, directly counter, to our interests, and in the case of Burma runs very much counter to the interests of the Burmese people. I mean, I promised all the Members here that I and this Administration are going to work very hard on increasing our efforts to help bring about democratic change in Burma. It is something that my Bureau, the State Department, and the Administration are very much committed to.

If you look at the—one of the cornerstones of the second term of this Administration, it is democratization. Just as on one hand we have what I would call Exhibit A on success in Indonesia, we have on the other hand Exhibit A of where it is not succeeding, and that is Burma. And I think you very correctly highlighted the strong need for work on that.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The Chinese are having a negative; in terms of the Chinese Government's negative influence on these other countries, the United States, however, has been trying to engage Vietnam, and I do know that there was an agreement that the Vietnamese now were going to respect at least that one element of freedom, freedom of religion. How has that understanding worked out? Has there been any demonstrable progress? I, in fact, have heard that we have got problems in the Central Highlands with Protestants, the Christians in the Montagnard community being brutalized.

Mr. JOHN. I served in Vietnam from 1999 to 2001 at the consulate in Ho Chi Minh City. I think if you look at the 10-year history of our relations, the last 5 years, religious freedom has improved. I would say we are far short of a goal, though, where there is absolute religious freedom for the Vietnamese to practice religion as they see fit. But what Vietnam needs to do, there are recent legislative changes in Vietnam, but they need to fully implement them so religious practitioners can practice freely.

They have released a number of prominent religious prisoners including religious dissident Father Nguyen Van Ly, and they have begun to permit the registration and reopening of churches that had previously been closed. As you referred to on May 5th, the United States and Vietnam concluded an agreement on religious freedom that specifically commits the Government of Vietnam to fully implement its new legislation on religious practice, to render previous contradictory legislation obsolete, and make other specific improvements in religious freedom. As I said, we are not there yet on where Vietnam should be for religious freedom, but it is one that we are continuing to work on.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me note that we are not there anywhere with Vietnam when it comes to any freedom. And religious freedom would be the easiest thing for them to reform, and I am looking very closely at that. The day that they permit religious broadcasting in Vietnam or major publication by religious entities in Vietnam, that will be the day that we know that they are committed to religious freedom, instead of just letting a few people out of jail who never should have been jailed in the first place or opening up churches that never should have been closed in the first place.

So let us make sure that we hold them to a high standard because these are people's lives, and these are the things that we

cherish as a people of the United States, that make us the people of the United States, because we cherish freedom, freedom of religion and freedom of speech, et cetera.

Thank you very much. And thank you for focusing so much and bragging so much, as you should, on the successes that we have had in Indonesia that, as Mr. Faleomavaega pointed out, has a very checkered background. That is a great success. It looks good.

In Malaysia, again you have had a transfer of power peacefully; and another country that has a strong Islamic influence so that we can demonstrate to the world that democracy and Islam are not contradictory, another goal of this Administration.

So thank you very much. It was very good testimony today.

Mr. JOHN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. LEACH. I am going to ask Mr. Faleomavaega if he has any questions in a second, but let me comment for just a minute on challenges that go beyond where we have political differences.

The truly positive news on Vietnam is that Vietnam and the United States are developing closer relations. And we were at war three decades ago. It is actually an extraordinary model for North Korea that you can have better relations despite a past of war, and Vietnam symbolizes this.

Burma is even a greater challenge. But there are human problems that exceed or overwhelm political differences. One that the United States responded to with great professionalism and great compassion and great care was the tsunami. We may have a disease tsunami. We don't know. If we do have a disease tsunami with the avian flu, one of the areas the State Department is going to have to think through is, do we respond in different ways to Burma, and do we put aside certain differences to seek cooperation for the sake of the Burmese people, also for the sake of everybody else in the world, and whether it be directly through the United States or through China?

And the extraordinary aspect of our China relations is that there are quite a number of areas of mutual self-interest, others of great challenge, and our challenge is to increase the mutual self-interest. But I think that is an area that we ought to be talking with China about vis-a-vis Burma. If they have greater influence there, if problems develop, how can educative and other efforts take place? But I think we are going to have to think through strategies in that regard unrelated to whether it be policy change or regime change that we might like or not, like in a particular country.

Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would be curious, Secretary John, I would be interested to know if the State Department can establish a list of known military regimes or dictatorships currently in existence in the world. I mean, we were able to destroy the axis of evil: Iran, Libya, North Korea, I believe. I would be very curious what countries in the world do have similar set-ups like Burma or Myanmar as we currently have.

As the Chairman and my good friend from California had mentioned earlier, I put a little note here that diplomacy is full of contradictions. It appears, in my humble observation, that if it is not in our national interest, whether it be a government-to-government

relationship with other nations, we don't take much interest in it. And defining that national interest, whether it be security or economic, I believe those are probably the two basic issues that we would look on in defining how our relationship should be with that country. So it appears to me that the level of our attention, if you will, toward Burma is not in our national interest. So we just put economic sanctions, and has been the case for all these years, but never really seriously address other issues.

As I recall years ago when we did confront the Foreign Minister of Thailand, I don't know if it is the same Foreign Minister, his criticism of our policy toward Burma was, how are you going to get the people to know if we don't engage the military regime in Burma even though, as it may, it be nondemocratic, just as we are currently engaging Musharraf, who committed a coup d'etat against a duly-elected President of Pakistan? As much as we have also patted ourselves on the back for getting rid of Saddam Hussein, yet completely on the other side of the coin, we are in bed with Musharraf, which led to all the evils and problems that we are now faced with, proliferation issues and nuclear weapons.

So I do share the Chairman's concern. I just wanted to ask—our colleague from New York wanted me to raise this issue with you—that apparently our President met with the Prime Minister of Thailand in New York and wanted to know if there was any substance discussed concerning Burma, because it appears that Thailand also has a very direct interest or involvement with Burma. And I assume there was no public statements made as far as Burma is concerned in that light. Are you aware of anything?

Mr. JOHN. The President hosted a bilateral meeting here in Washington on Monday with Prime Minister Thaksin from Thailand. The statement they made at the end of a meeting, the joint statement, called for democratization in Burma, and the two did address the issue of Burma.

Going back to the first part of your question about whether we engage in Burma because it doesn't seem to fit our national interests, I think I would say that Burma very much fits our national security interests probably in three areas: Security, economic, and, very important, the area of democratic principles, which is a very important national interest of the United States.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. We have been saying that for how many years now?

Mr. JOHN. Well, as I note, I am personally committed to ramping up how we deal with Burma, and I think you will see that in this term of the Administration, we are working. Now, I am not going to promise that we are going to bring down the SPDC with a great action plan over the next 7 months or 12 months, but there is a determination to promote democratization there. And in terms of national security interests, disease, HIV, avian influenza very much affects our national security interest, and it is an area that we do want to seek maximum cooperation with neighbors of Burma and, as necessary, bilaterally in order to prevent that from affecting our interests.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again.

Mr. LEACH. I would like to raise first a couple of refugee issues. The North Korea Human Rights Act contemplates resettlement of possible North Korean refugees in the United States as well as assistance elsewhere. I am aware that there are a number of North Koreans in Southeast Asia, and at the moment they have been directed to UNHCR instead of consideration of asylum under the North Korean Human Rights Act. Have you given consideration to implementing the law in this regard with regard to refugees in Southeast Asia?

Mr. JOHN. The State Department and DHS, we are reviewing ways that North Korean refugees would have access to United States refugee admissions programs in a secure way that doesn't heighten their vulnerability. Our concern is that USG involvement could increase their vulnerability by revealing their current locations or otherwise drawing attention to them.

We are reaching out to governments in Southeast Asia and working with UNHCR in an effort to develop a mechanism to facilitate the applications of North Korean refugees, and the main concern of the United States is preventing the return to the DPRK of North Korean asylum seekers. The situation they face presents us with unique challenges. The international community has limited ability to access them because most of them are in China, and the PRC does not recognize them as refugees. Furthermore, UNHCR does not process North Korean refugees due to their eligibility for ROK citizenship. To date, North Koreans have not been referred to the United States for resettlement through this traditional channel. The UNHCR refers them to ROK for resettlement there. Last year through informal and under-the-radar arrangements, more than 2,000 North Koreans reached the ROK.

Initial indications are that governments hosting North Korean refugees have indicated they oppose direct United States-funded humanitarian assistance and U.S. refugee admissions programs on their territories. We believe that the primary reason for this reluctance is that these host countries believe that such a program would cause a magnet affect for more North Koreans to come to those countries. In addition, some of these governments have relationships with Pyongyang that they are unwilling to complicate by involving the United States Government in the movement of North Koreans.

When we can access the refugees, we have to find a way of determining precisely who they are so we can address our serious national security concerns that come into play when admitting nationals from a state that sponsors terrorism, and we also are very happy to provide a classified briefing on this issue if you wish.

Mr. LEACH. Fair enough.

Let me turn to another subject. I understand there are about 5,700 Hmong refugees in Thailand today that may be repatriated to Laos beginning almost immediately. Are you aware of this situation. Has the United States Government taken a position on this?

Mr. JOHN. I was looking at that Monday and Tuesday. I think it first came to our attention on Monday. We immediately contacted the Embassy in Bangkok who worked with the Thai Government and international groups and international NGOs in Thailand. As of yesterday the information I have is that the group that

you referred to is not about to be returned, and there is no movement to send them out. We will continue to monitor and, if necessary, weigh in with the Thai Government.

Mr. LEACH. That is good news.

One final question. A year or so ago, our Government proposed the establishment of a regional maritime security initiative for the Straits of Malacca. What is the status of that?

Mr. JOHN. Last week, I believe it was last week, the Governments of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia started the program Eyes in the Sky, which is an aerial monitoring of the Malaccan Straits. And it is significant in the fact that this is the first time that these three nations have cooperated in a way to patrol the Straits of Malacca for primarily piracy, but there is the potential of terrorism.

I can't speak to the status of our involvement with that because I am not sure. In terms of the Eyes in the Sky program, that is just those three nations. We continue to work on ways that we can support the Malaccan Straits security working with the littoral straits.

I would note Eyes in the Sky is still in its infant stages. It is something that needs a lot of improvement, but the significant step is the fact that they are working together, and it has actually literally taken off.

Mr. LEACH. Good. Thank you very much. Let me thank you for your testimony, and we appreciate your views and your service.

The Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this timely and important hearing to highlight the recent developments, trends, and U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. I am particularly interested in hearing the views of our witnesses today on democratization, security, Islamisation and human rights. I appreciate that you are also looking closely at the real risk that Southeast Asia is becoming part of the Chinese sphere of influence, at the expense of weakening American ties to the region.

As Co-chairman of the Congressional Indonesia Caucus I have a keen interest in our bilateral relationship with Indonesia. The post-Tsunami relief and reconstruction afforded major new opportunities to strengthen our relationship with Indonesia and Thailand. We responded with a public and private mobilization of aid, and our military's emergency role in the early post disaster period was greatly appreciated.

Several months ago I was concerned about the inability of ASEAN to forge a policy on Burma. Yet, after growing political pressure from the ASEAN community and the international community—the Burmese Government relinquished the rotating ASEAN Chairmanship during the Ministers' Meeting in Vientiane. We must continue pressure on Rangoon to address human rights violations. I have joined with other members of Congress to support efforts to refer Burma to the UN Security Council. The UN General Assembly has passed 12 consecutive resolutions calling for the authorities in Burma to engage in "national reconciliation" and the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) has passed 13 consecutive resolutions calling for the ruling junta to cease its brutal human rights abuses. However, Burma's military regime has refused to work with the Secretary General's office, barring his envoy from entering the country since 2003; the junta has also barred the special rapporteur on human rights appointed by the Human Rights Commission.

Burma has recruited more child soldiers than any other country in the world, destroyed over 2,500 villages in eastern Burma alone; Burma is the only country in history to be a target of sanctions as called for by International Labor Organization (a United Nations agency); the military regime uses rape as a weapon of war against its own citizens. The junta presents a threat to international peace and security that must be confronted by the United Nations Security Council.

Last week, I—along with several other colleagues—sent a letter to President Bush, calling on the President to urge Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to end his support for Burma's military government. While other ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia have actively sought to increase pressure on Burma, the Thai government has become Southeast Asia's chief supporter of the Burmese military dictatorship. In the months ahead I sincerely hope that ASEAN nations continue to put pressure on Burma as well as create a stronger dialogue with the Thai government.

ASEAN must now look to the future and redouble efforts to strengthen legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks, as well as work towards the goal of integration. In fact, during their most recent meeting, the leaders of ASEAN discussed the importance of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), and how the developed and economically stable Member Countries will play an integral role in providing the less developed Member Countries with bilateral technical assistance in order to facilitate the regional integration of ASEAN.

Furthermore, I was pleased to see that issues of well-being and health are a major focus for the nations of ASEAN, who recently "... expressed [their] concern over the serious threat to human health posed by the evolving, unprecedented spread of avian influenza ... and reaffirmed [their] commitment to developing national pan-

demic influenza preparedness plans and implementing surveillance of human and avian influenza in order to provide an early warning of, and a timely response to outbreaks in poultry and in humans.” President Bush—during his September 14th address at the United Nations—announced the formal creation of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, which will enhance medical readiness to contain—and more importantly, prevent—a global influenza pandemic. This announcement came hours before Indonesian health officials confirmed the fourth human death from bird flu.

It is also my sincere hope that the United States will continue to directly engage the nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations directly, and work on strengthening and expanding cooperation on counterterrorism and other transnational crime efforts, developing work plans to improve the exchange of information, build law-enforcement capacity, and protect land, sea, and air transport. Not only will these efforts help in combating the ruthless and murderous thugs who are bent on destroying the emerging democracies of Southeast Asia, but will also foster strong political will and cooperation. Already we have witnessed ASEAN Members reaching out and expanding cooperation in areas of information exchange, and law enforcement capacity-building efforts through training and education.

As we have all witnessed—especially in the wake of Hurricane Katrina—there has been increased speculation and concern over the impact of the rising oil prices, and this poses a significant challenge to the region of Southeast Asia—and no where is this more evident than the country of Indonesia, where oil subsidies have increased to over one-fourth of the Government’s 2005 budget. In fact—this year alone—the Indonesian Rupiah has lost more than 5% of its value, and is currently at its lowest level since March 2002. While the potential cutting of the fuel subsidy in Indonesia remains a major hurdle, I am positive that President Yudhoyono will carefully balance the economic concerns of the government with the needs of the country’s poorest citizens.

Along those same lines, as the Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Indonesia Caucus, I wish to comment briefly on my observations with regards to the world’s largest Muslim country, and third largest democracy. As you are well aware, Indonesia has embarked on a dramatic transition to democratic governance over the past six years, culminating in the country’s first directly-elected President. Indonesia serves as a role model for democracies throughout the world. Economic growth and political reforms can and must occur in tandem. More foreign investment in this resource-rich country—with a population of 230 million—will not only create new employment opportunities, but it will also help improve the standard of living for many Indonesians. And, as you can imagine, the positive role that U.S. foreign policy, business and investment can play is enormous.

Furthermore, I was pleased that—during last week’s Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing—Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric John reaffirmed that the United States supports the territorial integrity of Indonesia. The Papuans and Indonesian government must build a solid and stable partnership of cooperation and find an equitable and peaceful solution to the situation in Papua. I believe that Special Autonomy offers the best chance for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, following in the model of the agreement in Aceh, Indonesia. This law offers the Papuans greater economic benefits and political independence and control over their local affairs. It is my hope that President Yudhoyono continues to aggressively pursue negotiations to bring this conflict to a peaceful resolution; moreover, let me stress that this situation must be resolved by the Papuans and Indonesian government—this is not the place for the United States Congress.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. Well into the future, ASEAN’s active and important role in trade, investment, counterterrorism and security cooperation will not only benefit the policy goals of the United States Government, but serve as a source of stability and vibrant economic activity. I look forward to hearing the testimony of all of our witnesses today.

RESPONSES FROM MR. ERIC JOHN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE JAMES A. LEACH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Question:

What are the procedures presently followed by U.S. diplomatic posts when people claiming to be North Koreans present themselves, seeking protection and resettlement as refugees?

Response:

The Department of State has developed general principles to guide access and screening of North Koreans who seek resettlement in the U.S. Such persons should first be designated "persons of concern" by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), be entitled to receive protection from *refoulement* by host governments obligated under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Additional Protocol, and receive assistance from UNHCR and/or non-governmental organizations. These individuals do not require support from the U.S. nor have any time limits on their stays in the host countries while undergoing the often lengthy process for U.S. resettlement.

Before determining to process an individual, including North Korean nationals, for resettlement in the U.S., our primary objectives when such individuals approach our diplomatic posts seeking protection or resettlement as refugees are to facilitate their contact with UNHCR and to encourage adequate protection and attention from host governments. We cooperate with UNHCR to facilitate the movement of North Korean asylum seekers. UNHCR's role is to prevent the forcible repatriation (*refoulement*) of individual asylum seekers and determine/facilitate the most appropriate solutions for them. The Department of State has worked successfully with UNHCR and host governments in preventing *refoulement* of North Korean refugees who surface in third countries.

The resettlement destinations of asylum seekers are not governed by the individuals' stated preferences, but rather by UNHCR's determination of the most appropriate resolution under all of the attendant circumstances. Because North Koreans receive South Korean citizenship upon resettlement in the Republic of Korea (ROK) under the ROK constitution, UNHCR does not make a determination as to whether North Koreans are "refugees." Instead, UNHCR designates North Koreans as "persons of concern," i.e., asylum seekers, and does not refer these cases to the USG or other countries for refugee resettlement, but simply facilitates their movement to the ROK. However, the USG does not require a referral from UNHCR to commence processing North Koreans who might be eligible for U.S. resettlement under the above criteria. Processing refugees for resettlement in the U.S. requires the approval of the governments hosting those asylum seekers. We are exploring with other countries the possibility of the United States interviewing certain North Koreans for resettlement to the U.S.

Since 2001, the Department of State has dealt with several cases where North Koreans have gained unauthorized entry to U.S. diplomatic facilities. Although under certain extremely limited circumstances "temporary refuge" may be granted to North Korean asylum seekers who enter U.S. diplomatic facilities, such a grant does not have any bearing on a decision to consider such individuals for resettlement in the U.S. Ideally, those qualifying for resettlement in the U.S. would not have illegally entered a U.S. diplomatic facility.

Question:

What is the Department doing to implement U.S. Public Law 108-333, which directs the Secretary to "facilitate the submission of applications . . . by citizens of North Korea seeking protection as refugees"?

Response:

Over the last year, the Department of State has taken numerous steps to implement P.L. 108-333, the North Korea Human Rights Act (the Act), which directs the Secretary to "facilitate the submission of applications . . . by citizens of North Korea seeking protection as refugees." The Department, working closely with other USG agencies, has held consultations with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other governments on our requirements under the Act. The Department would be pleased to offer a classified briefing on these discussions and their results.

Question:

Have U.S. diplomats in Southeast Asia demarched host governments regarding the requirements of P.L. 108-333 and the desire of the U.S. to screen and process North Korean refugees for resettlement in the U.S.? If so, when and at what level were such demarches made? (Please provide this information on a country-by-country specific basis.)

Response:

The U.S. surveyed governments in the region about their position on several aspects of the North Korean refugee issue in September 2005. The results of this survey indicated that many host governments are reluctant to allow the USG to process North Korean refugees for resettlement in the U.S. from within their territory. The

Department would be pleased to offer a classified briefing on the country-specific implementation and results of this survey, as well as other country specific issues.

Question:

The Congress remains concerned about the apparent poisoning of Indonesian human rights advocate Munir Said Thalib on a September 2004 flight to the Netherlands. Credible justice for his murder will be an important indicator of reform and transparency in Indonesia's emerging democracy. What is the current status of the Indonesian investigation into Munir's murder? Has the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN) cooperated fully with that investigation? Has the Indonesian government released the contents of the report by the official fact-finding team, which reported to President Yudhoyono in June of this year?

Response:

The Administration has followed closely this case from the beginning. Upon news of his death last year, we released a press statement expressing our shock and sadness, acknowledging Munir's status as an internationally respected human rights activist, and stating our hope that the investigation would reveal the facts about the circumstances surrounding his death.

As the investigation began, our Embassy met quickly with the Indonesian police investigating the case and communicated our interest in seeing justice for Munir's death to the highest levels in the Indonesian government, including to President Yudhoyono. Ambassador Pascoe met early on with Munir's widow, Suciwati, and members of the Fact Finding Team established by President Yudhoyono. Embassy officials have followed closely developments in both the police investigation and Fact Finding Team, and Embassy efforts continue. Under Secretary Dobriansky met earlier this summer with Suciwati in Washington, and other State Department officials have met with NGOs to discuss the ongoing case. During meetings in Jakarta in July, we impressed upon the Indonesian government that we view the pursuit of justice in this case as a critical issue.

We believe that it is critical for the Indonesian government to pursue a thorough investigation and seek justice in this case. A credible investigation and related prosecutions would demonstrate to the world that Indonesia seeks accountability for this horrendous crime. We believe that the President's appointment and support for the Fact Finding Team is a positive step. Although the team's report has not been officially released, much of its content has found its way into the press. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the details of the current trial of one suspect, Polycarpus, or the ongoing police investigation, but we continue to closely monitor both.

RESPONSES FROM MR. ERIC JOHN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE EARL BLUMENAUER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Question:

Of the many important developments occurring in Indonesia, one of the most overlooked is the signing of a memorandum of understanding in Helsinki on August 15th between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to end the long-standing conflict and human rights abuses in Aceh. However, much of the difficult work of implementation is still to come. Does the administration support the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding? What do you believe is necessary to ensure that the implementation is successful and what role is the United States playing to promote that success?

Response:

We fully support the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding and commend the Indonesian Government and the GAM—the Aceh separatist movement—for their courage to seek lasting peace for the people of Aceh. Both sides made significant concessions to reach mutually agreeable terms. The MoU is comprehensive, and contains provisions to address security, political, and economic issues.

Early progress in implementation has been excellent. As stipulated in the MoU, GAM has already completed the first of four scheduled weapons turn-ins that are to be completed by the end of this year. The Indonesian military has simultaneously begun to withdraw troops and equipment, and the level of violence in the province has decreased significantly. Successful implementation of the security provisions of the MoU is essential for the political and economic provisions of the agreement to be implemented. I traveled to Banda Aceh September 1 through October 1 and met

with the EU and ASEAN members of the Aceh Monitoring Mission, the Indonesian military, and GAM. All expressed optimism with implementation though they acknowledged much trust needs to be built between TNI and GAM.

We intend to support several key aspects of MoU implementation with U.S. funding, including support for public information campaigns, public dialogue, technical assistance and capacity-building for key provincial/local government offices charged with MOU implementation, and assistance related to the reintegration of GAM ex-combatants into mainstream society. In coordination with other key donors and partners, USAID plans to support community-based development programs in village clusters that are accepting the reintegration of amnestied political prisoners or demobilized GAM fighters or have been identified as a highly conflict-affected community. In addition, at the Indonesian government's request, during the first week in October 2005, we plan to broaden our existing International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) bureau managed Indonesian police reform assistance program to include civil disturbance management and human rights police training in Aceh. The police are in the process of taking over security duties in the province from the military, and this training will help to ensure that in doing so they are properly trained and sensitized to human rights issues.

Question:

When I visited the tsunami-affected region in January of this year, and in the months since, I have been struck by some of the innovative and far-sighted actions taken by both the United States and the governments in the region, such as cash-for-work programs, discussion of including environmental standards in reconstruction as a way of reducing vulnerability to future disasters, and an insistence that reconstruction activities be planned out in advance. As the United States deals with recovering and rebuilding from our own natural disaster, are there any lessons from how Southeast Asia dealt with the tsunami that we may be able to apply to future disaster responses? As we recognize the role that lack of preparedness and effective mitigation strategies played in our own tragedy, what can the State Department do to promote disaster mitigation efforts abroad, as the House requests in the FY06-07 Foreign Relations Authorization Bill?

Response:

Among the lessons learned are that the most effective responders are those who are already operational on the ground in affected areas and which have pre-existing relationships with local communities, NGOs and government entities. We also learned that promoting restoration of livelihoods at an early stage through cash-for-work and other initiatives is critical to successful recovery and return of self-sufficiency to affected disaster areas.

The creation of a Tsunami Early Warning System (TEWS) will be necessary to promote disaster risk reduction by community-based disaster preparedness. When complemented by hazard mitigation programs and alerts, TEWS should allow communities to mobilize effectively.

In some tsunami-affected countries, imposition of new land use policies has delayed assistance, generated inefficiencies, and left unresolved issues that could plague tsunami survivors for years. Engaging in land policy discussion early and often can result in appropriate, effective and timely interventions.

To promote disaster mitigation efforts abroad, we need a multi-year commitment to disaster preparedness and to build on ongoing successful USG-supported initiatives. In Asia, for example, USAID/ OFDA has invested \$43.8 million in disaster preparedness and mitigation since 1995. In Latin America, USAID/OFDA disaster management and training assistance has reached 40,000 participants and certified 3,500 instructors in 26 countries since 1989. These programs require a minimum of 2-5 years to develop.

In light of recent events, community-based preparedness and hazard mitigation programs, including evacuation planning, should be a major feature of any USG post-tsunami funding activity. This would begin to reduce vulnerability to hazards in coastal settlements.

Question:

As was raised during the hearing, former Czech President Vaclav Havel and Archbishop Desmond Tutu released a report yesterday prepared by DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary entitled, "Threat to the Peace: A Call for the UN Security Council to Act in Burma." They make the case that Burma should be referred to the United Nations (sic) Security Council as Burma's regime has produced at least 700,000 refugees, is the leading producer of methamphetamines in Southeast Asia, has recruited more child soldiers than any other country in the world, has been virtually kicked-out of the UN's International Labor Organization, and destroyed 2,700 villages in

eastern Burma alone in recent years. Does the administration support referring Burma to the UN Security Council? What specific efforts is the administration making to gather the necessary votes to include Burma on the Security Council agenda?

Response:

The United States is exploring with other Security Council members bringing the situation in Burma before the Council. We have approached UN missions in New York to seek their views on the matter, and are making similar inquiries in capitals. It is not clear yet whether Council members will support this initiative.

We continue to look for ways to highlight the situation in Burma before the international community, including within the UN system. In June, we raised Burma during Security Council consultations under "other matters." The United Kingdom, France, Greece, Denmark and Romania supported this effort. We also sponsored resolutions critical of Burma's human rights record at the 2004 UN General Assembly and the 2005 UN Commission on Human Rights. We look forward to working with the European Union and other partners and allies to ensure that this year's UNGA resolution accurately reflects the deteriorating situation on the ground in Burma.

Question:

I noted in the background memo prepared by Chairman Leach that the U.S. is engaged in efforts to clean up unexploded ordnance in Laos. What is the extent of these efforts? Who is actually carrying out the remediation efforts? What technology is being used?

Response:

We provided assistance to several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work with UXO Lao, the quasi-independent government agency charged by the GOL with conducting clearance operations. UXO Lao cleared over 1,255 hectares of land (exceeding targets by 11 percent) and destroyed more than 25,300 items of UXO. We also support programs aimed at increasing the awareness of local people to the danger of UXO; we reached over 300,000 people in 2004 and the first quarter of 2005. We have requested \$3 million in Humanitarian Demining funding (NADR-HD) for FY2006 and FY2007 to support clearance operations; for FY2005, Congress earmarked \$2.5 million for these efforts.

Clearance operations are still conducted using manual demining technology. Currently, we are working with donors and the involved NGOs to improve the precision of identifying the location of UXO, thereby reducing the area the operators have to cover and expediting the process. We also work with UXO Lao to improve its management operations through the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement's Integrated Mine Action Services contractor. The contractor has recently completed a country-wide evaluation of the UXO removal process in Laos. We intend to begin a full-scale implementation plan in 2006 based on findings from this study contingent on the availability of funding.

The Lao government recently created a National Regulatory Authority (NRA) to oversee UXO Lao and clearance operations. After a year-long search, the Lao government has designated a candidate to serve as director of the NRA. We continue to press the Lao government to complete this process so the NRA can begin its important work.

Question:

We had a hearing in this Subcommittee last fall where we heard from experts on a broad range of the environmental challenges facing Asia. What do you believe are the most pressing short-term and the most important long-term environmental issues in Southeast Asia and what efforts is the administration making to mitigate the adverse effects?

Response:

The Asian tsunami has led to a number of environmental problems in the region, particularly in the areas of health and access to safe water. Access to drinking water and sanitation continues to be a pressing problem in the region. Even before the tsunami, eighty percent of the global population without access to improved sanitation, and almost two-thirds without access to improved water supply, live in Asia. In addition to our traditional work through bilateral assistance programs, the Department has launched a number of recent multilateral partnerships to increase access to drinking water and sanitation. These partnerships are focused on increasing political will and catalyzing action in four key areas: water and health, transboundary water, integrated water resources financing, and mobilizing domestic capital for water-related infrastructure. Examples of some of this work within the region include a partnership between USAID's Development Credit Authority and

the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation on joint financing programs in the Philippines; working with the Global Water Partnerships to support the implementation of national water plans in Indonesia; and supporting the distribution of technologies for disinfecting and safely storing water at the household level in Laos, Indonesia, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Southeast Asia's growing population and energy needs have led to a number of opportunities and initiatives in the region. We are working with major partners in the region to develop the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which will undertake a broad range of activities to promote cleaner and more efficient energy technologies. During the US-ASEAN dialogue in June, co-chaired by Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick and Thai Foreign Minister Kantathi, both sides agreed to advance cooperation in the field of energy. As part of our commitment, we have begun exploring with USAID and others in the region the possibility of co-hosting a clean energy financing workshop for ASEAN countries. The purpose of the workshop is to promote the efficient and sustainable use of modern energy services. We are also working with the World Bank Country Office in the Philippines on their May 2006 Country Development Marketplace which will highlight access to energy as a means to ensure development with equity.

The continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza among wild and domestic birds in Southeast Asia, and the confirmation of new human cases in the region, have raised concerns that the ongoing outbreak could spark a human pandemic. In July USDA hosted a meeting of the APEC Health Task Force to help member economies consider how best to work with international organizations dedicated to animal and human health in preventing an influenza pandemic.

Finally, wildlife trafficking remains a serious concern, both because of the threat it poses to many of the world's most endangered species and because of its potential to spread animal-borne diseases such as SARS and avian influenza. The US has created an international wildlife initiative, the centerpiece of which is the newly announced Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT) initiative. Environmental crime is one of the most profitable and fastest growing areas of crime, with wildlife trafficking alone comprising an estimated \$10 billion a year. CAWT is focusing its initial efforts in Asia, where ASEAN environment ministers are expected to launch the development of a regional law enforcement network when they meet in Bangkok in November, 2005.

Question:

The process of massive urbanization that we're witnessing around the world is particularly acute in Southeast Asia. I am concerned that as metropolitan areas throughout the developing world experience a greater strain on natural resources, health and education infrastructures, and economic capacity, we will begin to see failed cities as sources of instability and insecurity. What efforts is the United States undertaking to promote investment in transportation and other key infrastructure systems, and the coordination of these investments with sound land use and economic development planning, that will be necessary to deal with the growth of megacities?

Response:

The United States Government works closely with the World Bank, and the regional multilateral development banks to partner with developing countries on appropriate development policies. We utilize our board membership, through the presence of the U.S. Executive Director at each bank, to advocate for country strategies that identify the necessary investments for all aspects of development, including ways to deal with urbanization. Most strategies call for investment in road networks, power sector projects, water supply and wastewater management, as well as educational sector development. Specific investment projects are then developed, addressing land use and economic development considerations as needed. Three other vital elements, all of which the US vigorously promotes, are investment in people, economic freedom, and democracy. Progress requires decent education for all, the freedom for businesses to be created and to operate, and opportunities for people to exercise control over their local and national political processes.

One example of our efforts in SE Asia is our work in Indonesia where the government has self-identified \$72 billion in infrastructure investment necessary over the next five years. The USG actively engages the GOI on business climate reform, legal reform and macroeconomic policy in a concerted effort to assist the GOI in attracting foreign direct investment and enhancing the investment climate for both domestic and foreign investors. Bilaterally the USG, through USAID, provides technical assistance and resources in a number of areas that help promote better urban policies. USAID provides training to strengthen Indonesia's natural resource manage-

ment capacity at the national, provincial and local levels. Additionally, Embassy Jakarta supports efforts of the GOI, NGOs, universities and the international community and the private sector to protect Indonesia's natural resources; ensure that development occurs in a transparent, sustainable, and environmentally sound manner; and promote policies and technologies that minimize environmental impacts.

